MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS

—IBBIE McCOLL WILSON

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MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS

—BY—

IBBIE McCOLM WILSON

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By OLIVER H. MILLER

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Preface

As a memorial to the dear departed, more enduring than a monument of stone, the poet's pen-thoughts expressed in this miscellaneous collection, are published for the benefit and appreciation of the many friends and relatives of the author and her sister.

Born of Scotch-Irish parentage and tracing ancestry back to one Lord Burke, Ibbie McColm Wilson first smiled upon this world on February 18, 1834, in Baltimore, Maryland. Spending her childhood and young womanhood there, she enjoyed the advantages of the educational institutions of that city, becoming a proficient English scholar and later a skilled student and translator of German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. She spent several years teaching in the schools of Maryland and Pennsylvania and in 1858 went to Iowa, teaching several years in Johnson, Iowa and Benton counties. The family removing to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1863, she remained eight or nine years there, after which she spent some time in Iowa with her sister, and in 1876, after returning to Baltimore, was married to Col. Thomas J. Wilson. He was engaged in the publishing business, and she became his assistant. They lived very happily together for nine or ten years, when their happiness was

shattered by the death of Col. Wilson. Upon the death of Col. Wilson, she took up the work which he laid down. Besides being engaged in the work of translating, Mrs. Wilson was employed by the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Maryland Journal* and other newspapers, and also contributed articles to the leading magazines. Most of her work, however, has not been preserved, though she published one book entitled "*The Fate of the Leaf.*" In 1892, Mrs. Wilson went to Europe where she spent about a year visiting the principal cities and points of historical interest in Great Britain and on the continent. Returning to America, a couple of years were spent in New York City engaged in the same work as she had been in Baltimore, after which she returned to the city of her birth, to which, in 1905, she bid adieu and went to Iowa. At the home of her only sister, Mrs. Mary Louise Miller, in the village of Oxford, holding daily communion with the birds and trees and flowers and the other beauties of nature which she so greatly loved, Ibbie McColm Wilson spent the remaining days of her life, dying May 8, 1908.

Index

Page
Address to Oratorio Society of Baltimore....119
All Hail.....125
An Invitation..... 67
An Invitation to Thanksgiving Dinner..... 47
A Tribute from His Pupil and Friend.....134
A Valentine..... 89
Bachelor Girl, The.....124
Beeing 173
Bereaved 71
Birthday Greeting..... 79
Bracket Bird's Carol, The..... 37
Burning the Slough.....146
Castle Dorn.....143
Charity of Beauty, The.....164
Christmas Bells..... 40
Christ Is Born, The..... 52
Coming King, The.....110
Coming Men, The..... 75
Difference, The..... 58
Descent from the Cross, The..... 97
Fannie's Feelings..... 33
Farewell 129
Fresh Wine..... 96
Grandfather Monkey..... 68
Grape Unique, The..... 18
Hope Embalmed..... 74
If He Were He..... 50
"I'm a Cripple"..... 57
In the Manger..... 78
Judge's Case, The..... 69
Last Amen, The..... 77
Merry Christmas..... 35
Months of the Year, The..... 83

Page
Mud-Sill Melodies—No. 1 87
Mud-Sill Melodies—No. 2 90
Naughty Newsboys 31
Night of Life, The 45
Numbers 130
Ode for the Laying of a Cornerstone 38
Ode to Ella 142
Once More 117
Old Year's Burial, The 98
Oysterman's Daughter, The 20
Paraphrase of a Portion of 42d Psalm 139
Peace on Earth 93
Pellegrina Pondinella 70
Phantom Foresters, The 25
Plaint of the Corpse, The 28
"Please Help the Blind" 49
Prayer 68
Prayer Book, The 128
Resting River, The 43
River-King, The 72
Saint Brendan's Vision 1
Saint John Baptist 141
Sentinel of the Ages, The 60
Shadow Solo, The 42
Shema Yisrael 133
Ship of Fate, The 114
Sir Pilgrim 108
Spiritus Ignis 5
Tekos (The Tramp) 65
Temples of the Lord, The 131
The Bachelor Girl 124
The Bracket Bird's Carol 37
The Charity of Beauty 167
The Christ is Born 52
The Coming King 110
The Coming Men 75
The Difference 58
The Descent from the Cross 97
The Grape Unique 18
The Judge's Case 69

Page
The Last Amen 77
The Months of the Year..... 83
The Night of Life..... 45
The Old Year's Burial..... 98
The Oysterman's Daughter 20
The Phantom Foresters 25
The Plaint of the Corpse..... 28
The Prayer Book.....128
The Resting River 43
The River-King 72
The Sentinel of the Ages..... 60
The Shadow Solo..... 42
The Ship of Fate.....114
The Temples of the Lord.....131
The Viking's Burial..... 80
Thorns 155
To Hattie..... 12
Tribute from His Pupil and Friend, A.....134
Valentine, A..... 89
Viking's Burial, The..... 80
What Do They Think?..... 76
Who Knows Why?..... 79
Women Versus Men..... 54

Dream Days

Beeing 173
Burning the Slough.....146
Castle Dorn.....143
Charity of Beauty, The.....164
Thorns 155

Saint Brendan's Vision

The good Saint Brendan sailed away,
Before the wintry breeze,
To carry forth the Faith he loved,
Across the northern seas.

The wild waves beat upon his boat;
Keen grew the winds, and shrill;
The long, long weary nights were dark;
Yet naught he feared of ill.

"For Angels seek these solemn seas,
At Christmastide," said he,
"To celebrate, on earth, with us,
Our Lord's Nativity.

"Then, through each iceberg's jewelled halls,
Their heavenly music rings;
And even now, descends the down
From their swift-gathering wings."

Yet, all in bitter storm and gloom,
Had passed the Festal Day;
And in the sobbing surge, at night,
Saint Brendan's vessel lay.

Alone, he paced the icy deck,
  Absorbed in thoughful prayer;
When, suddenly, a pallid light
  Illumed the frosty air.

Saint Brendan lifted up his eyes,
  To see what this might be;
And, high among the rifting clouds,
  The Moon plunged, helplessly.

But as, at length, his gaze returned
  From wandering in the skies,
A Vision strange, and full of dread,
  Met his affrighted eyes.

For, close athwart his vessel's prow,
  An Iceberg whitely gleamed,
While, dark, upon its towering crest,
  A Human Form there seemed.

With steady stare Saint Brendan scanned
  That fearful Figure o'er;
Then shrieked a Name, with such a shriek
  As drowned the Ocean's roar.

"Yes! I am He—Iscariot!—
  Whom all men justly scorn;
And I shall always curse the day
  That ever I was born.

"Although—sometimes—when crazed by pain,
  I say it must be true
That Christ will pardon gain for All
  Who know not what they do."

"But, Judas! is this Place thine own?
Declare, if thou mayst tell,"—
Saint Brendan cried, "for men believe
That thou art doomed in Hell."

"Ah!—Men should know that Hell must be,
Wherever dwells Despair;—
Yes,—where Its fires most fiercely rage,
The Traitor's place is there."

"But canst thou wander thence, at will?
Or how didst thou escape?"
"My wondrous Story hear me tell,"
Replied the shuddering Shape.

"One Christmas morning, as in drench
Of seething pitch I lay,
An Angel touched me on the arm,
And bore my Soul away.

"To cool, amid the Arctic seas,
The Fires my Form within,—
Though not to dim the quenchless Flame
Of my remembered Sin.

"When freezing winds had cooled my breath,
Some syllables to frame,
I, stammering, asked my shining Guide,
Why unto me he came.

"What need to tell? The Lord declared,—
And, surely, thou must know,—
That no small Cup of Charity
Can unrewarded go.

" 'A Leper, once, in Joppa's streets,
Was struggling with the blast,
And thou about his shoulders bare
Thy sheltering mantle cast.

" "Twas I: and that thy kindly deed
Requital may obtain,
The Holy One, upon this Day,
Bids me assuage thy pain.'

"So, every Christmas morn, to me
This Spirit, hastening, hies—
I feel the cooling of his wings,
Before I meet his eyes,

"Filled with such sympathy as makes
Contempt of Fiends and Men
Less terrible for me to bear
Until he comes again."

'Twas Midnight—with a thundering crash
The Iceberg rent in twain;
And with the Traitor's weight of guilt,
Sank down beneath the Main.

Saint Brendan bowed his reverent head,
And fell on bended knee:
"Oh, Thanks be unto God," he said,
"For Blessed Charity."

Spiritus Ignis

(The Spirit of the Fire)

Weary, I sat before my chamber fire,
Once when the gathering shades of evening fell;
Without, there raged the rain's incessant roar,
The surly tempest's angry, fitful swell.

Sadly I mused o'er all my futile plans,
Illusive hopes, and efforts only vain;
The ceaseless toil of dreary human life,
In certainty of loss, and doubt of gain.

"Wherefore," I said, "this weary, endless moil,
With early rising, and but tardy rest?
It mocks the soul with utter nothingness:—
If all were nothing, surely this were best."

"Mortal, forbear," an unknown voice replied,
"Thy hopeless doubt, thy bitter, baseless blame,
Betray alone thy hapless ignorance,
Or littleness, by far the greater shame."

Distant the sound, like toll of solemn bells
Across the depths of some vast, silent sea;
Yet sweet and clear its gentle cadence fell,
As mountain-bugle's echoed melody.

Parting the spires of ruddy, purple flame
A dusky Form arose; then bending, bowed;
With both hands resting on his staff he stood;
His ashen robes fell round him like a shroud.

Hoary his scanty locks and flowing beard;
His broad, bare brow a fitting temple seemed
For wisdom, might, and majesty serene;
Like lightning-points his keen eyes glittering gleamed.

"Spirit of primal Fire,"—he said—"am I;
Of all created beings I was first;
First form of potent, universal Life
That ever on astonished chaos burst.

"Forth from the opened palm of Deity
Into the vast abysmal void I sprang;
I leaped, I plunged, I reeled, I whirled, I rolled;
And far through space my joyous birth-song rang.

"Blazing, for ages on and on I sped,
Rejoicing in the glorious heat and light
I blindly thought eternal since, alas!
I've been the wretched thrall of cold, dark Night.

"Slowly my radiant sphere grew chill and dim,
And through it elemental strife arose,
As quickened atoms claimed affinities,
And fought or fled, arrayed as deadly foes.

"Vapors ascend and, falling back in rains,
Hiss from the molten rocks in clouds of steam;
Storms fiercely rage, and horrid thunders roll;
Amid the gloom terrific lightnings gleam.

"Shuddered the new-made Earth, asunder rent,
And I bemoaned creation all undone.
But, lo! the shoreless ocean rolled around;
Creation's work was scarcely yet begun.

"Dreary, and dull, and dense, and desolate,
The vacant waters idly swirled and swayed
Through sterile ages of monotony:—
I marvelled o'er a world so vainly made.

"Convulsed at length, the surges throb and seethe;
The rocks beneath, in mighty fragments rent,
Rush quaking from their places, and amain,
Piling their masses, scale the firmament.

"Perching on lonely peaks of granite bare
I whiled the hours of many a cyclic day,
Watching the Land wrest empire from the Sea,
And each new gain by torrents swept away.

"Watching the phases of Silurian Life
Wherewith successively the waters teem,
Till Earth expands her rocky, fiery jaws,
And swift they vanish as a baseless dream.

"Building vast systems only to destroy
Seemed Nature's aim and object;—nothing more:—
Until I late perceived that each new age
Ranked higher than the one that went before.

"Nobler its forms, their larger faculties,
Surely, though by gradations slow, ascend.
The growing Earth superior uses served:
Nature was working for some special end.

"Basking extended on a torrid beach,
In languid torpor, idly then I lay:
In listless wonder what would next befall
I slowly dreamed the lengthened hours away.

"Sudden and swift a pulse of unknown life
Its ecstasy through all my being thrilled;
New forces to its depths my nature stirred,
With strange and untried powers my soul was filled.

"Clutching the sands with frightened, frantic grasp,
My lengthening limbs I firmly fastened there;
Then sprang aloft in lustrous verdure clothed,
And stood a giant forest in mid-air.

"Proudly I swelled each rugged, bulky bole,
And far abroad its branching arms outspread,
As through the sunshine and the shadowy mists,
Grandly upreared each lofty, verdant head.

"Breathing perennial airs of softest balm,
Once more resorbing heat and light devine,
I bathed my waving fronds in showers and dews,
I drank my fill of deadly carbon-wine.

"Breezes sang softly; mad winds wildly raved;
Waves lapsed along the shores in melody;
With various life the tepid marshes swarmed;
Strange Saurian monsters came to claim the sea.

"Smiling above me stretched cerulean skies;
And back to them an answering smile I sent.
I now discerned the aim of Nature's plan,
And spent an aeon of supreme content.

"Worthy, I saw, this glorious result;
This grand expanse of ocean, earth, and air,
Of all the effort and delay required
To found a world so populous and fair.

"Planning for this, I saw, had Nature toiled;
For this her works destroyed and fashioned o'er;
I saw—Alas! I saw the heavens depart;
Slowly I sank submerged, and saw no more.

"Buried in beds of mud, and silt, and slime,
With gasping, writhing myriads then I lay;
And hardening in stony, black despair,
Helpless, I moaned the hopeless years away.

"I heard the seas above me thundering roll;
I felt the solid rocks vibrate below,
And ice, relentless, grind Earth's growth away,
For ages more, what passed I could not know.

"Naught cared I now for what might else befall:
Whatever happened, this to me was plain:—
Though all of Nature's plans might not be foiled,
I was a failure: I was made in vain.

"Forces beneath me rising then once more
Restored me to the light of Heaven again.
To a fresh world of wondrous loveliness,
Peopled with mighty beasts, and lordly men.

"Roused from the slumbers of the dismal past,
Entranced, upon the scene I tireless gaze;
Each new display of Nature's fertile powers
Absorbs me with a new and glad amaze.

"Wiser I'd grown and waited calmly now
The coming of each subsequent event.
Though cold, and dark, and seeming dead I lay,
I rested patient in assured content.

"Hammers and picks could give me no alarm;
The blasting filled me with delirious joy,
Without a fear of what my fate might be
I yielded to the powers mankind employ.

"Wielding o'er earth the forces of the skies,
The delegated sway of Deity,
Man breaks the cruel spells of Night and Death,
And sets the Spirit of their captive free.

"Blindly he yet ignores his lofty powers,—
The greatness of his destined high estate,—
Sits and bewails his momentary ills,
And rails in impious haste against his fate.

"Timid, he quails before each mimic storm;
Of every good deplores the needful cost;
And when his cherished hopes in ruins lie,
Thinks all the good of life forever lost.

"Grateful to you for liberty regained,
A tribute back I fain would seek to bring:
My warmth and brightness gladly I diffuse,
And as a warning my strange story sing.

"Courage, despondent Man! and wisdom, too,
From my experience you at least may gain;
And if my blunders lead your steps aright,
I shall not then have blundered all in vain.

"Patient abide, through good or evil days;
Work willingly; serenely, calmly wait;
Sure that each ruined era but evolves
The basis of a higher, nobler state.

"Back to the stars again, I now must speed,
Another course of usefulness to run
What comes to me henceforth I'll trust is good.
Farewell! To-night my earthly work is done."

Snapping his golden girdle's jeweled clasp,
He dropped his dusky robe and mantle grey.
A blinding flash of flame shot up on high:
Around my hearth the scattered ashes lay.

Since, though my lot has often been severe,
I've better borne its weight of care and pain;
I, working, wait and trustful hope the while
That every loss will bring some better gain.

I see the Spirit's Form in every fire,
His lessons in my memory remain:
A cheering warmth my aching heart pervades;
A light still lingers in my weary brain.

To Hattie

I have read the simple legend
Read the "Song of Hiawatha":—
Read of Hiawatha's prowess,
Of his wonderful achievements
In a cause so patriotic
As the progress of his people.
Read the story of his childhood,
Of his childhood wild and lonely,
With no friends but good Nokomis
And the boaster, old Iagoo;
Or at least none that we read of
Though I think it not unlikely
That the children of the village
Sometimes shared his sports and pleasures.
Of his intercourse with Nature,
Very beautiful and touching
In simplicity and pathos.
Of his growing up to manhood
His mad visit to his father,
To the West Wind, Mudjekeewis;
Of his change of disposition
Consequent upon that visit.
Read of how he prayed and fasted
Seven whole days and nights successive;
Of his struggle with Mondamin,
With the lovely youth Mondamin,—
Never was a youth more charming
Than this green and gold Mondamin.
I have read too of his friendships,

Frindships true, and strong, and lasting
Such as well deserved that title:—
And in this thing if no other
Let us hope that many people
More refined and more enlightened
May resemble Hiawatha
Imitate this noble savage.
I read also of his sailing
Of his sailing and his fishing,
And his conflict with Pearl-Father,
With the god of Wealth and Wampum:—
Wondrous tales, but very childish,
They remind me of the stories
That amused me in my childhood
Of the famed Sinbad the Sailor,
And of Jack the Giant Killer.
Then his expeditious wooing
Of the maiden Laughing Water,
And her very prompt acceptance
Of his gift and his addresses.
Then of Hiawatha's wedding
And the comical assemblage
Met to grace the grand occasion,
And the various expedients
That Nokomis had recourse to,
To "kill time" as we would have it
And to make her guests "contented:"
And I wondered as I read it
If it commonly requires
Such exertion of the hostess
That the guests may be—"*contented.*"
But I fear that I will tire you

With my prosing and reflections,
Yet I can't forbear to mention
The queer story of Iagoo,
To remind you of Osseo
Of the ugly old Osseo
Who though ugly and decrepit
Had a soul of fairest beauty
Had a soul of brightest lustre
Had a heart so pure and lovely
That it took my own a captive
Took my own a willing captive
And I thanked the old Iagoo
For the story of Osseo.
But you asked for my opinion
On the merits of the legend,
On the merits of the author
Of the "Song of Hiawatha"
And I promised I would give it
So now that I have read it
Have read every chapter in it
I would fain redeem my promise
And would tell you that I like it:—
Like the wild and simple story
With the freshness of the morning
With the dewdrops bright upon it,
With the fragrance of sweet flowers,
With the shadow and the sunshine,
With the mellow notes of birdlings,
And the sighing through the branches
Of the gentle winds of summer,
Or the howling of the tempest
On the cold dark nights of winter;

Or the majesty of thunder,
Or the dashing of the waters,
Or the glory of the sunset
Of the moon, the stars, the night-time,
With the beauties of all Nature
Shining on each page resplendent.
Yes, I like the childlike story
And I like the author of it;
No, I more than *like* the poet,
Who could write a "Hiawatha":
For the breathing of his music
As it floats along the heart-lyre
Finds an echo on the heart strings
That will linger wnile a heart string
Shall be left to thrill responsive:
For his sweet melodious numbers
In harmonious cadence swelling
Like the rushing of a river
Or the heave of mighty ocean
Stir up all the soul within me
Waken all my better feelings
Waken "longings, yearnings, strivings"
For the beautiful and holy
Of the "Here and the Hereafter,"
He abounds in truthful feeling,
And in simile poetic,
Has a rich imagination
And a quick and keen perception
Of all beauties seen and hidden.
Points that always strike my fancy
And particularly charm me;
And it is in these things chiefly

That I think our pleasing poet
Most excels and most delights us;
But my sad fault-finding nature
Ever whispers to my judgment
"'Tis imperfect, 'tis imperfect,
Write on all things '*Imperfection.*'"
Therefore do I find objections
Find some very strong objections
To this "Song of Hiawatha;"
And I marvel much that writers
Men of learning, men of talent,
Will not give us books whose contents
We may read aloud to others.

Do you ever long for freedom
From the shackles and the trammels
Of our life so cold and formal?
Long to be a child of Nature
And to live with Nature's children
Live the wild life of the Indian?
Long to wander through the forest,
Long to climb the rugged mountain
Or descending to the valley
There to trace the shining river
And to float upon its waters
With a heart as free and happy
Free from care, and glad and joyous
As the wild-bird's song of pleasure;
As the gushing, leaping, dancing
Of the merry mountain streamlet?
I do sometimes, for a moment
But I very soon remember
That this life of careless roaming

That this life of idle dreaming
Would deprive me of my book-friends
Of the necessary presence
Of my wise and good companions
Who so kindly soothe and cheer me
When my heart is sad and lonely.
Then ashamed of my impatience
I confess myself an ingrate
And I still my heart's complaining
With the thought that soon at farthest
God will send the kind Death-Angel
To unbar my soul's dark prison,
To unbind its fettered pinions,
And to bid the trembling captive
Soar away into the regions
Of the glorious "Hereafter."
Asking many thousand pardons
Of yourself and of the poet—
Of the poet for the freedom
I have taken with his verses,
And for having played so poorly
Both the critic and the mimic:—
And of you for the intrusion
Of my worthless thoughts upon you—
Very humbly asking pardon
I will send you this, dear Hattie,
Laying the command upon you
That as soon as you have read it
Or before, if it so please you,
You will tear it up or burn it
Or some otherwise destroy it
That I may not be tormented

As I always am by thinking
That my weak and rude productions,
These rough monuments unchisled
By the master hand of genius
Will perpetuate my follies.
Pray accept my warmest wishes
For your happiness and welfare
And believe that I am ever
Yours affectionately,

—IBBIE.

The Grape Unique

Resplendent globe,
Whose purple robe
Thy royal rank declares,
With thy rich blood
In gracious flood
What other stream compares?

Fresh on the vine
Where tendrils twine
Thy perfect form around,
In bowers of green,
And silvery sheen,
Thy hidden charms are found.

And when mature,
Refined and pure,
With Nature's force replete,
For right and wrong
Thy powers are strong;
Thy potencies how sweet!

For crimson stains
Of sins and pains
From thy mad pulses flow;
Though golden light,
Than stars more bright,
Beams from thy sacred glow.

When weak and worn,
Sad and forlorn,
By ruthless Fate distressed,
Thy festive cheer
Dispels man's fear,
And Hope dilates his breast.

Poetic fire
Thou canst inspire
To ecstasy sublime;
Or, to all ill,
Pervert man's will,
And nerve his hand for crime.

We also trace
Still higher grace
Mysterious One, in thee.
Channel divine,
And radiant shrine,
Of heavenly energy.

Potential Thou!
We know not how,
Nor why, thy frame should be
The chosen cell
Where deigns to dwell
Alminghty Deity.

All—Potency!
We search for Thee
Through Thy dominions wide;
Then, wondering see
Infinity
In this small sphere abide.

Yet, Fruit benign,
Earthborn; divine;
Herein lies mystery:
That foul fiends dare
Inhabit where
Reigns sole Supremacy.

One other cell
Exists as well
Which God and demons share:
Weak human Heart,
Thou, only, art
The arbitrator there.

Angels who fell,
From heaven to hell,
Were doomed, thenceforth, of yore;
But Man may choose,—
Regain, or lose,—
His Paradise once more.

The Oysterman's Daughter

Walls of blue steel grew up around
A floor of leaden sea;
A copper coping hung aloft,
Its baneful canopy;
While in the west, the great red sun
Was sinking heavily.

Where to the southward, far and wide,
The vision sweeps away,
A fleet of oyster-boats, becalmed,
On the still waters lay;
Or, in the distance stood apart,
As gulls rest on the Bay.

Yet steadily the boatmen wrought,
Slow-singing, as they plied
The dredges, or tall oyster-tongs,
And with each other vied
In capturing, and lading up,
The treasures of the tide.

One little craft there was, alone,
Where idleness beguiled
The sultry hour. A Father, there,
Held in his arms his Child,
Who, in his heart, on darkest day,
Made sunshine when she smiled.

Rough and begrimed, externally,
The Oysterman might be,
Yet polished fine, by Nature's grace,
Inside the shell was he,—
Its whiteness flecked with gleaming glints
Of colors fair to see.

As for the child that to his heart
So tenderly he pressed,
She was the pearl that ever lay
Clasped closely on his breast;
The treasure by kind Heaven vouchsafed,
His life to render blest.

They lived alone, among the pines,
And barrens wild and bleak,
Their home a cabin on the shore,
Beside a shining creek,
That, like a serpent, writhing, slid
Into the Chesapeake.

He was not young; and she was all
That Fate to him had spared;
And thought of severance from her
To think he never dared.
He lived to make her happiness,
Nor for aught else he cared.

So, when the brazen, burning glare
Spread over sky and sea,
The Oysterman sat down, and took
His daughter on his knee,
From sense of being motherless
To keep her spirit free.

Though gaunt and gray the Oysterman,
His voice and eye were mild,
As with his wonted tenderness
He soothed the weary Child,
With croon of gentle lullaby,
Or tale of wonder wild.

He told her of the gorgeous sights
In the city far away,
And said that she should see them soon,
When he sailed up the Bay;
And promised her abundant store
Of toys, and fine array.

He kissed the peach-bloom of her cheek;
He stroked her tawny hair;
And pressed her little dimpled hand
Against his bosom bare.
And all his soul with rapture thrilled
To hold her pillowed there.

And when her eyelids drooped upon
His heaven in her eyes,
He, dreaming, planned the future bright
That should her life surprise,
And crown him with the love of one
So good, and fair, and wise.

Meanwhile, the steeds from Neptune's stalls
Had left their ocean-play,
And in portentous, angry haste
Came racing up the Bay;
Foaming and champing at their bits,
With roar of muffled neigh.

With snowy mane, and lashing tail,
They leap exultingly,
And soon awake to tumult wild
The somber, sullen sea,
That all the silent afternoon
Had slept in treachery.

The pungy rocked, a curling wave
Broke over it in spray:
Swift, seeking safety for his child,
The Sailor sprang away,
To battle with the elements:
Nor did he fear the fray.

The air grew black, the thunder crashed,
  Fast blew the fearful gale:—
On, on, the little pungy sped
  While yet half-reefed its sail;
But of a score of fearful storms
  Its master knew the tale.

Then fell the night amid the squall;
  Still madly raged the Bay;
Whirled by the winds from east and west,
  The boat dashed on its way:—
Beaten by turns this way and that,
  On each side half it lay.

Till, lifted finally, it rose,
  And with successive shocks,
It pounded, lodged, and stranded lay
  Among the reefing rocks,
With parting seams, and bottom
  Fast moored in Nature's docks.

When, through each crevice of the deck
  The waters rushed full fast,
About his Daughter's fragile form
  His coat the Father cast,
And with a rope securely tied,
  He bound her to the mast.

With thankful heart, the Oysterman
  Prepared his watch to keep,
With arm about the Child outstretched
  Standing submerged, knee-deep:
And on his shoulder laid her head,
  That she, perchance, might sleep.

He bade her trust his loving care,
And never feel a fear,
For Angels watched them from the sky,
And God himself was near,
Who would protect her from all harm,
Since she to Him was dear.

The tempest spent itself, at last,
Subsiding peacefully.
Half-sped the night; the stars came out,
And spangled all the sea:—
The Child was sleeping on the mast.
Her Father—how fared he?

Through long, dark hours he calmly stood,
Stunned by the wild waves roar;
Until a drifting log dashed by,
Sweeping him on before.—
A passing steamer carried him,
Unconscious, to the shore.

Swift, with the flush of earliest dawn,
Across the rippling wave,
The Father came, in eager haste,
His precious Child to save.—
Lashed to the fallen mast she lay:
The blue Bay was her grave.

The Phantom Foresters

Along the low and level shores
That stretch and curve away
From mainland, inland, cove, and point

Adown the wide blue Bay,
Where sedges nod, and cornfields wave,
With curb of yellow sands,
Beneath tall elms and maple shades
Each neat, quaint homestead stands.

Amid its orchards spreading wide,
In bloom of beauteous robes,
Or slowly storing lucious wealth
In glowing, downy globes:
While reaching onward, north and south,
Across the changeful surge,
Dim purple glooms of forest bound
The far horizon's verge.

But sometimes to the foreground near
The stealthy woodlands creep
As though in heedless moment caught
By the wild waters' sweep:
Or lured by music of the waves;
Or by their rage and roar;
Or by the cadenced swells that surge
Across from shore to shore.

These to the eyes of mariners
A secret strange unfold,
Which to the ears of mortal men
No sprite has ever told.
For there each voyager that sails
Across the mystic deep
Can see the Phantom Foresters
Their wonted revels keep.

And where the pine trees' bare brown boles
The forest spaces show
The bands of festive Phantom Shades
Go whirling to and fro.
Waltzing in mazes slow or swift,
As ebbs or flows the sea,
They never for an instant pause
In their weird revelry.

To every beat of booming wave
That strikes the wearied shore
The lithe forms sway in willowy grace
Across the forest floor:
In measures true to wavelets play
Among the whispering sands,
Or to the rush of frantic tides
That desolate the lands.

They wait not for the dusky night,
Nor for the moon's dim ray,
But solemnly disport themselves
Throughout the sunlit day.
And every snowy sail that speeds
Before the urgent breeze
May sight the Phantom Foresters
Gliding among the trees.

Yet sail or steamer may not stop
The pinelands to explore
For them the Vision fades away,
And will return no more
Until the travlers, again,
Set sail upon the Bay,
When every sportive Forester
Resumes the dance, straightway.

Then say not folk of fairy lore
On earth no longer dwell;
All voyagers adown the Bay
For other tales can tell.
Yet question not; Bay shores are fair
As fairy realms could be:—
With senses of his own to trust,
Who doubts may go and see.

The Plaint of the Corpse

With senses that can not be feeling,
Though like them in some sort of way,
I am able to see without vision,
To hear all the sounds of the day,
And to know what occurs to the Figure
Of frozen inanimate clay
Which once was Myself, and yet whether,
Though close to it somewhere I stay,
I now am without or within it,
I am not at all able to say.

I know that this Figure is lying,
Pent up in its close narrow bed,
With a very poor sort of a pillow
Beneath its indifferent head.
That it has not a pang left of hunger,
Although it was never well fed,
Not an ache, nor a pain, nor discomfort
Despite the wild life it has led.
But while it jolts over the cobbles,

As slowly the hearse horses tread,
I must be excused that I wonder
If this is the way to be dead.

I thought that the dead were unconscious:
That when my quick pulses should rest,
When my weak brain should cease its commotion,
And the poor heart grow still in my breast,
There would be nothing left but my Body:
That not the most vigilant quest
From the poles to the burning equator,
Or round the wide world east and west,
Would reveal any trace of a mortal
Who never knew Life at its best.

But what do I mean by "My Body"?
And who is the still conscious I,
That owns it, and goes along with it,
Regardless that Bodies can die?
What am I? Where am I? How is it
That though I most earnestly try
I can not locate or discover
The thing that must surely be I!
The Self that contrives to elude me,
This Self that refuses to die!

That I am, and am going some whither,
Is as plain as to sense it could be,
But the what, and the where are the questions
That puzzle mysterious Me.
Like a ship with its pointed prow parting
The waves of a dark, unknown sea,

My wedge of a coffin is cleaving,
  Alike for my Body and Me,
A pathway through space to some region
  Where that which has being must be.

Shall I enter the grave with my Body?—
  Still mine though I use it no more!—
Having sown to the flesh, must corruption
  Be all my futurity's store?
Shall I lie there while vile things are creeping
  My mouldering carcass all o'er,
Till I enter the form of some reptile,
  Myself quite as low and as poor?
O would I might sleep without dreaming
  Until even Time were no more!

Might sleep! But death seems only waking.
  Such a waking as never before
Has quickened my dead-alive conscience:
  And scanning my history o'er,
I long for a just retribution,
  A payment of penalty sore,
And will sink through the earth to perdition
  My manifold sins to deplore.
For I would not dare walk into heaven
  Though left at its unguarded door.

And yet—when my parents were wicked,
  And taught me all law to defy,
For the nature and training they gave me
  Pray who is responsible? I?
Oh no! I shall trust the Almighty
  To give me a fair chance to try

To do what is right, understanding
His law with its consequent Why;
Or else, blot Me quite out of being,
And let the whole Self of me die!

Naughty Newsboys

" 'Here's your World, sir; please to buy it,
For my mother's sick in bed;
Little sister's back is broken;
And my poor old father's dead.'

"Do you think that fetched him, fellows?
That he'd care if mother'd die?
No! he had to have the paper:
There's no pity in his eye!

"Come! you needn't think I'm hoaxing,
When I'm preaching gospel truth:—
Don't I learn, in school, on Sundays,
To be moral in my youth?

"Mother always says she's heartsick
Since her hopes in life have fled;
Jennie's crooked, and you know it;
And the old man's drunken-dead."

"Here's a lady; looks soft-hearted.
I can move her heart, perhaps;
But I'll try another racket,
For a lesson to these chaps.

"Madam, could you spare a nickel
On a fellow's birthday, when
He has not a single penny?
Thank you! Wont you make it ten?

"None of your 'ha-has,' you kidlets,
If you don't want broken heads.
And if you've no eye for business,
Run home to your little beds.

" 'Home and beds!' You think I'm joking.
But we'll have fine quarters soon,
When the Newsboys' Home is furnished,
Which it is to be in June."

"What is that you're saying, Jenkins?
That your mother thinks it wrong?
Cried about it when she heard it;
Groans about it all day long?

"Says these kindly souls a blunder
Of benevolence will make,
With their bait of bed and breakfast,
All the boys from home to take?

"That the children, now half vagrants,
Independent then will be,
And from all the cares and duties
Of a home life be quite free?

"Well; go tell your mother, Jenkins,
That I've known for quite a while,
That home-life is antiquated,
And is going out of style.

"Tell her that the modern mother
From her home must busy be,
Earning bread to feed her children
Or must run humanity."

Fannie's Feelings*

When I read your verses, Clarence,
On the *Journal's* foremost page,
For three-quarters of a minute
I was in a fearful rage.

For it surely was atrocious
Thus to blazon through the Press,
All our doings of last summer,
And your consequent distress.

I'd a mind not to forgive you;
I suppose, though, that I must,
Since of course you meant it kindly,
And I would not be unjust.

I am sorry all the country
Takes my absence so to heart.
Tell the woods, and streams and so forth,
That the best of friends must part.

If these birds are so unhappy,
Why not shoot the lovely things?
Take your gun and try, some morning;
I could utilize their wings.

*(This poem was written in answer to a poem entitled "When the Birds Again Are Singing," and signed "Clar," which appeared in the "Maryland Journal.")

I don't like to make things wretched;
But I had to leave, you know:
For as summer with one swallow,
Would be winter with one beau.

And I've had a charming season;
Gay and festive times, so far:
Parties, germans, two proposals!
How delightful such things are!

And there's more such fun awaiting
Us gay girls, on pleasure bent;
For we mean to make things lively
Till the coming in of Lent.

Now about your invitation
For next summer, I will try
To return to fields of clover,
When the wintry months roll by.

For I see, O Clarence, Clarence,
By the way you play the bard,
You unfortunate young fellow,
That you must be hit quite hard.

And the absolute devotion
Of a "case" so "gone" as this,
Though absurd, is quite delicious
And too rich a treat to miss.

In the meantime, fix your buggy;
And especially make sure
Of the harness; for I'm timid
If those straps are not secure.

Don't forget about the chickens;
Have them set in time; for I,
To salt mackerel and bacon
Much prefer nice chicken-pie.

And a broil is nice for breakfast,
Ere those "dewey meads" we try;
While a long tramp by the streamlet
Makes good supper of a fry.

With these things to keep you busy,
The short days will pass, all we,
After scouring half the country,
Rest beneath that willow tree.

So, when birds again are singing,—
Those you miss will sing on still,—
You shall find your festive Fanny,
At the cot beside the hill.

Merry Christmas

Peal the bells! 'Tis Christmas morn,
Merry Christmas!
Hail the day the Christ was born,
Merry Christmas!
Angel choirs new anthems sing;
Sons of men your tribute bring;
All creation echoing,
Welcome merry Christmas.

Peal the bells! This festive day,
Merry Christmas,
Must have greeting glad and gay,
Merry Christmas!
Let the joyous song resound,
All the spacious earth around
Nor one silent soul be found
On the merry Christmas.

Peal the bells! The gladsome strain,
Merry Christmas,
Echoes in prolonged refrain,
Merry Christmas!
Yet there rings not joy alone;
Grief's inevitable moan
Lends its mournful undertone
To the merry Christmas.

Peal the bells! Through every clime
Merry Christmas,
Greets the nations with its chimes
Merry Christmas!
But full many a heart can tell
In the music's deepest swell,
Solemn sound of parting knell,
On the merry Christmas.

How can lonely mourners say
Merry Christmas?
How a sad soul call the day
Merry Christmas?
Can distress and pain and care,
Withered want and grim despair,
In the grace and glory share
Of the merry Christmas?

Can this sacred, happy time,
Merry Christmas,
Be to souls debased by crime
Merry Christmas?
Does this gracious holy-tide
For life's ills relief provide,
Bring a blessing to abide
After merry Christmas?

Peal the bells! 'Tis even so,
Merry Christmas,
Spans Life's clouds with Hope's bright bow;
Merry Christmas
Is to sad humanity
Pledge of happiness to be
Brought to its futurity
Through the merry Christmas.

This the prototype, blest Day!
Merry Christmas!
Of the joys that last for aye.
Merry Christmas
Is an earnest of the store
Of rich blessings God will pour
O'er the world for evermore,
Endless merry Christmas.

The Bracket Bird's Carol

How blest it is to be a bird,
And have a heart that sings!

January 7, 1901. Written for Miss Indiana Comegys.

To soar above earth's pleasant fields
On strong, unfettered wings!
He skims rough Difficulty's streams
With sweep of pinion bold;
And vested warm by Nature's care
Fears never storm nor cold.

Even when "driven to the wall",
Far from his native nest,
In calm content he ponders o'er
The blessedness of rest.
His downy bosom swells with peace;
He foldeth fast his wings;
His dreams are filled with silent songs:—
Then waketh he, and sings.

Ode

For the laying of the corner-stone of the new Temple of the First Baltimore Hebrew congregation.

A firm and sure foundation stone
Beneath our walls we lay,
When we a sacred Temple rear,
Wherein to God we pray,
Where tuneful voices sing his praise,
And grateful hearts glad homage pay.

For we, like David's royal son,
With willing hands would frame
The hallowed shrine in which may dwell
Our God's most holy Name:
And where, as Lord of heaven and earth,
The God of Israel we proclaim.

The stone which by the nations great,
  And mightier far than we,
For ages long has been refused,
  Our corner-stone shall be:
The Lord of hosts we worship here;
His Name is One, and One is He.

O Lord and Father, God alone,
  Accept the gifts we bring,
And let thy gracious eyes respect
  Our pious offering;
The tribute of thy children's love,
To Thee, their everlasting King.

When in this house we worship thee,
  O Lord, thy people bless:
Blot out, and cover, all the sins
  Which humbly we confess.
Look down from heaven, thy dwelling place,
And send us comfort in distress.

Nor for ourselves alone, do we
  Thy blessings, Lord, implore:
But may the pious strangers, too,
  Who here thy name adore,
Be heard by Thee in heaven, and share
With us, thy Peace, forevermore.

O Thou, whose mighty hand hath laid
  The earth's foundations sure,
Whose own right hand spanned out, of old,
  The heavens bright and pure,
Grant us thy mercies, and thy grace,
While earth shall last, and heaven endure.

Christmas Bells

The world has sunk to its dreamful rest;
Soft lies the snow on the Earth's cold breast;
The stars in their courses, silently
Sweep on through the darkling midnight sky.
And Christmas bells solemnly ring
The Song of the Angels echoing.

The song that never again shall cease:
" 'To God in the highest be glory; and peace,'
Which erst from the world was mournfully driven,
Back to mankind again be given."
Christmas Bells! hopefully ring;
Glad tidings of great joy you bring.

Joy to a world by its woes distressed;
By the grief and shame of its guilt oppressed;
For the Lord of Life has come from the skies,
That the vilest heart to His own may rise.
Christmas Bells! joyfully ring;
Hope to the hopeless soul you bring.

Your glad sounds usher the generous cheer,
The gathering throngs of friends most dear,
The festival gay, the music, the mirth,
That welcome the summons to peace on earth.
Christmas Bells! merrily ring;
To happy hearts fresh gladness bring.

To eager childhood, what beside
Compares with the joys of Christmas-tide?

How brightens the shining of innocent eyes
That wake to the season's glad surprise.
Christmas Bells! merrily ring;
Delights to youthful hosts you bring.

Rare pleasures even to the hapless poor,
The season brings, in its bounteous store:
For old, and for young, for the sad, and the gay,
There are blessings unwonted on Christmas Day.
Christmas Bells! cheerily ring;
Good gifts to all, you surely bring.

Ring, Bells! for the friends, who, far away,
Share not the mirth of our festal day.
Ring joy to them wherever they be;
And waft them our greeting, o'er land and o'er sea.
And Christmas Bells! the while you ring,
Good tidings from the absent bring.

Dear Bells! how oft, in the olden time,
We listened to your gladsome chime,
With those who now deep-slumbering lie,
Beyond the reach of your melody.
Christmas Bells! tenderly ring;
Blest memories of the dead you bring.

Alas! old Bells, ye have rung for years,
Notes that were music in angels' ears,
Yet hearts there are where the songs you sing
Have found not the faintest echoing.
Christmas Bells! patiently ring;
Peace e'en to these, you yet may bring.

Sad soul, who hast naught that the soul requires;

Dead heart, consumed in thine own fierce fires;
The Bells have a message, especial, for thee:
"Thou art not yet, what thou yet shall be."
Christmas Bells! lovingly ring,
And fresh, sweet life to the crushed heart bring.

Shall a world, for its fashioning, eons need,
And a soul be moulded with greater speed?
First chaos; then fires; then floods; then gloom;
Then reptile vices: then virtues come.
So Christmas Bells, through the ages ring,
And the era of perfect manhood bring.

Then welcome the Day of the Saviours birth,
And His gift of Life to the death-doomed earth,
And let us all offer both life and love
To the below, and to Him above.
Christmas Bells! triumphantly ring;
To Christ, the Lord, your tribute bring.

The Shadow Solo

(Respectfully inscribed to Professor Pache.)

O Master Mind carved solid notes
Of music fine and rare,
And set them where the sunshine fell
Upon the sculptures fair.

Another Master found their forms
Traced on the ambient air;
And softly as a spirit breathes
He sang the shadows there.

February 27, 1900.

The Resting River

"O River! rolling to the sea,
Thy restless floods restrain!
Indulgent curb thy ceaseless haste
To reach the raging main.
Stretched on thy bed of silver sands
And pillowing rocks, below,
Rest peacefully, and then refreshed,
Upon thy journey go."
The rushing River answered, "Nay;
I must be ever on my way."

"O Time! that through an endless course
Dost thy long flight pursue,
Are there not years enough in store
For all that thou wouldst do?
From circling suns and stars descend
To some tall mountain's crest,
And nested in its downy snows
Thy folded pinions rest."
Time would not pause one word to say;
But grimly smiled, and sped away.

"O Life! along the city's streets
How wonderful thy flow,
As all day long the pulsing tides
At once both come and go!
And through the thunderous thoroughfares
What freights of joy and woe,
By mortals multitudinous,
Are carried to and fro!
What hope, love, hate, what grief and care
Thy swirling currents mingle there!"

Morn's early waves bring servile shoals
To dash on reefs of toil;
And later streams bear slower drift
For daily grind and moil.
Then surges fill the marts of trade;
While, gorgeous in array,
The bride unto the altar sails;
The dead are borne away.
And crested o'er with varying light
Waves follow into lapsing night.

Then ebbs away the mighty flood,—
As when, in fevered dream,
The sands beneath it swallow up
The waters of a stream;—
Till from the roaring streets the throngs
That swept through them by day,
In human and inhuman forms,
Have melted quite away;
And in the solemn midnight air
The channels of the street lie bare.

Back to its sources in the deep
Day's river rolls its tide,
To rest by night in caves of isles
That stud Life's ocean wide:
Where for awhile some wavelets play
In halls with splendor bright,
While others shrink, in pain or shame,
From the dark face of Night,
Until, by weariness opprest,
They sink to fitful dreams of rest.

Then o'er the Resting River broods
  Blest Night with sheltering wing,
That sheds a thousand precious balms
  Upon each living thing.
Rest, strength, forgetfulness, and peace
  With dewy freshness fall
Upon the Souls which else would fail
  To meet the morrow's call,
When comes its summons to the strife
And struggle of the Stream of Life.

The Night of Life

One by one the stars are fading
  From life's hemisphere of night;
And its latest moon, slow-waning,
  Long since quenched its feeble light.
There, in silence of the darkness,
  Sits the lonely Soul, in gloom,
Weary, longing, fearful, shrinking,
  Waiting wonderingly its doom.

"Soul! one truth let Wisdom whisper,
  While the sound thy sense can reach,
And thy numb perception ponder
  All the lesson she would teach.
It will nerve thy heart's last pulses
  Through this crucial, dire suspense,
And the thought, on trusty pinions,
  Bear thy drooping spirit hence.

"Listen, Soul! No dawn of morning
Ever yet thy life has known.
Noontide ray, or day's declining
Never yet on thee has shone.
For, bethink thee, it was evening
When thou wast to being born,
Since in process of creation
Eventide precedes the morn.

"Yet, when first our eyes we open
Where the moonbeams blandly play,
Staring vaguely through the dimness,
We mistake their light for day.
Then through life we go pursuing
Shadows fleeting, visions vain;
Sorely pressed by apprehensions
Which the sunshine might explain.

"True, the cheerful stars, in pity,
Far above our pathway rise;—
Hope, ambition, love, and honor
Bend on us celestial eyes.
These have brought thee inspiration
Joy from each thy heart has known;
Yet, sad Soul, they sank in silence,
And thou lingerest alone.

"Still, in death's extreme, remember
Through its bitterness and chill,
That not day now nears its ending,
But thy night of stress and ill:—
That the moment which thou fearest,
With its mystery and pain,
Brings the morrow of thy triumph;
Turns thy loss to countless gain.

"Think what glad surprise of waking
From life's evanescent dream
When its types shall find fulfillment
Realizing all they seem.
On the morning-star of duty
Fasten then thy steadfast gaze,
Till thy growing vision catches
Life's true day's resplendent rays."

An Invitation to Thanksgiving Dinner

Come to our festal board today,
Much valued Friend;
To scenes where all is bright and gay
Your presence lend.

The old, the young, the brave, the fair,
You there shall meet;
And each your welcome presence then
Will gladly greet.

In fact the absence of such guest
Would rob our cheer
Of much that makes this season blest
To us so dear.*

For all of those who love thee most
In this agree,
That this Day's greatest charm is lost
If it lack thee.

*Expensive.

Then come, and at our joyous board,
With wonted grace,†
Accept what freely we accord—
An honored place.

Come, and though Fate in days of yore
Has been unkind,
Her malice shall disturb no more
Thy peace of mind.

Amidst‡ thy friends no foe shall dare
Again molest;
Nor fill with anxious fear and care
Thy tender breast.

Unto our bosoms we will take§
Thee, chosen friend;
And of thy gobble-gobble make
An utter end.

And though the cook's well-sharpened darts
Despoiled thy youth
We'll take thee to our inmost hearts
In very truth.

There as** our life-blood thou shalt be
Most dearly prized;
Naught that would win our love from thee
Could be devised.

Then to my anxious, longing cry
Dear bird attend,
When in hot haste I bid thee fly
To serve†† thy friend.

†By the clergyman.
‡Encompassed by. §Literally.
**Being. ††Be served to.

So to our feast of thankfulness,
Gobbler, repair;
And we thy very bones will bless—
Till they are bare.

"Please Help the Blind"

They stand on the thronging street corners;
They sit in the vacant store doors;
They linger about the church portals;
Or they wander, perchance, into stores,
Where a small boy may venture to lead them,
Benevolent people to find,
Who are moved by the pitiful legend,
That labels its bearer as "Blind."

Now to don a costume that is stylish,
Not even impostors would dare,
So the orthodox, wily, blind beggar
Must be mean and shabby in air,
With eyes that are doubly unsightly;
While symptoms of weak, witless mind,
Will hasten response to his pleading
That dumbly says: "Please help the Bling."

But ah! you disconsolate pauper,
You ask vastly more than you know,
When you call upon kind-hearted mortals
To lighten the burden of woe
That rests on the world's weary shoulders,
With pressure becoming intense,
Because of humanity's blindness,
In senses beyond those of sense.

For, of the crowds roaming Earth's surface,
How surely Omniscience would find
That most, if not all, human beings,
In one eye, or both, are stone-blind.
Pride, passion, and ignorance, blending,
To blind mind and soul, all agree,
Until we lose Truth, in a darkness
Blinding most those who choose not to see.

And oh! what a spectacle startling
The wondering world would behold,
If all these deficient wayfarers
Were labeled in lettering bold!
To give a small alms to a beggar
Were easy; but what about these
Poor dwellers in darkness of spirit?
Pray, who will help them, if you please?

If He Were He

If He whose coming, in the silent eve,
My soul doth dread, as in the gloom I lie,
Straining each sense to sieze the certainty
It shrinks to meet, yet does not dare to fly:—
Were He
At whose approach the purple eventide
Grows into gold; and on my soul's drear night
Ever the fresh, glad beam of morning dawns,
With dewey sweets, and music in its light.
Ah me!
If He were He!

If He whose accents, like the dirge of hope,
Or like the trump of doom, fall on my ear,
That to escape them would all sounds forego,
Yet may not, must not, dare not choose but hear:—
Were He
Whose low, sweet tones my thirsty spirit drinks,
Like some rare song of wondrous melody,
Which the rapt soul that hears, no more would bear,
But when it closes, murmurs, "Let me die."
Ah me!
If He were He!

If he whose touch is to my shrinking form,
Than serpent's fold more deadly and more chill,
Stirring my blood in angry agony,
While I must bid each trembling nerve be still:—
Were He
Whose kisses melting on my burning brow,
Or cheek, or lips, with bliss my being thrill,
And my faint heart refresh, as silent dews
Their healing balms, o'er the parched earth distil.
Ah me!
If He were He!

If He who is my being's blight; my bane;
Source of my heart's hot tears, and ceaseless strife;
My fear; my bitterness; my fell despair;
My sum of all life's ills; my death in life:—
Were He

Whose love is all I know of peace, or rest,
Or hope that calms, or joy that comfortetn:
And all I ask to feel of blessedness:—
He who is my sole self; my life in death.
Oh God!
If He were He!

The Christ Is Born

"The Christ is born!" The glad, angelic strain
Cicled in music o'er Judea's plain;
And the still heart of starlit silence, stirred
By the momentum of that wondrous Word,
Thrilled to its center, trembled, and awoke,
And all the sacred seals that bound it broke,
To join the choir of shining seraphs, when
They sang of Peace on Earth, and Joy to Men.

"The Christ is born!" To-day the sacred sound
Has widened to the Earth's remotest bound:
Through glorious temples, through the courts of kings,
Through homes, and hovels, the glad anthem rings.
From centers bright with culture's raidant light,
To shades where souls grope through dim mental night,
The sound spreads over that mysterious sea
Whose waves encompass all humanity.

"The Christ is born!" To simple shepherd-men
What meant the wonderful announcement then?
What was betokened to their glad surprise
By birth that needed heralds from the skies?

"Behold your Saviour, who is Christ the Lord!"
Unknown, they owned Him; worshiped and adored.
Yet even the marvelling throngs of Galilee,
Saw not the mighty Saviour whom we see.

"The Christ is born!" What mean the words today
To us who echo the exultant lay
From every nation, every land, and clime,
Back through the ages of advancing time?
We chant the anthem, carol the refrain,
Swell the grand chorus of the heaven-taught strain,
And celebrate with festival the morn
When Christ the Saviour of mankind was born.

But is the Christ born unto us indeed?
A heavenly germ our earth born nature's need
To raise them—as the water turned to wine—
From Nature's death, to bliss of life divine.
Have we that Christ-sent spirit from above
Transfiguring life's gloom with joy and love?
That nature which the soul of Man allies
With the blest Natives of the glorious skies?

The Christ is born to us, indeed, if we
Partake of His divine humanity.
If we, for love of God and man, forego
The claims of Self, and bear each other's woe;
And, not content alone from earth to rise,
We help our feebler brethren to the skies.
Haste, Christmas suns, and bring the blessed morn
When thus the Christ in all our hearts is born!

Christmas, 1879.

Women Versus Men

Men, women, all humanity, attend!
No feeble voice a little woe complains:
The gathering sighs of many a suffering soul,
Down all the ages of oppression roll,
And to the heedless world a warning send,
In muttering-thunder strains.

For half a race, since first the world began,
Of selfish, cruel, fateful might possessed,
In forced subjection to despotic will,
A half a race has held;—is holding still:
This tyranous, usurping half is Man:
Woman, the "Sex suppressed."

Man rules the household; moulds and sways the State,
Enjoys its honors, offices, and pelf:
Though justice equal rights for each demands,
He grasps the scepter with his brawny hands;
Claims the sole right for both to legislate;
And sinks her in himself.

Down-trodden women, rise! your wrongs declare;
Assert your rights; your equal claims maintain,
The proud, false monarch of your race dethrone;
No longer his unjust dominion own:
Submit no more his galling chains to wear;
Aspire, instead to reign.

From city, village, mountain, valley, plain,
The whistling gale brings back the shrill reply:
"We rise; we come; with tongue, and tooth, and nail,
Our merciless oppressor to assail:
The cause of all our wrongs to ascertain;
Some remedy to try."

Heroic souls, the cause—'tis plain to see,—
Of man's assumptions, and your state forlorn,
Lies in the grizzled shag upon his face,
That lends the tyrant such majestic grace:
Bereft of this, creation's lord would be,
But a poor Samson shorn.

And with a beard, all else would woman gain.
Man's qualities, prerogatives, and place,
Would be her own, could she cheek, chin, and lip,
With whiskers, beard, moustache, complete, equip;
Could she by any miracle obtain
This glory on her face.

Ye can achieve it! Ye whose fertile skill,
Can on your heads such towering locks erect,
Can with the arts that to yourselves are known,
The ingenuity that's all your own,
And the great might of your resistless will,
Supply this slight defect.

But if ye fail in this, no hope remains;
No more is left for you to do, or dare;
For Nature's own immutable decree,

Has made the right of government to be,
In beards inherent, not in muddled brains,
As sciolists declare.

Without a beard, of inward force the sign,
Conventions, projects, suffrage, too, were vain:
While this reproach remains your doom is sealed;
The ancient law will never be repealed,
Which gives to Man alone the right divine,
Lord over all to reign.

Perform this prodigy, or count it sin,
The righteous laws of Nature to despise;
Dismiss forever your rebellious plans;
Return to needles, dusters, brooms, and pans;
And be content in duty's path to win
The honors fame denies.

Content to hold o'er hearts your only sway;
To rear your race to serve their kind, and God;
To cheer and help the weary and the weak;
Comforts around you to diffuse, and seek
To walk, with unobtrusive steps, the way
The perfect One once trod.

Like Him submission, humbly to obey;
Like Him to minister to helpless woe;
All sufferings with patience to endure;
Yourselves to purify as He is pure;
That, sacrificing all of self, you may
Like Him in all things grow.

She who man's bliss transformed to direst woe,
By the success of one ambitious plan,
That primal mischief now may best repair,
And best her consequent subjection bear,
By striving ever more and more to grow
True Woman, not mock Man.

Cleveland, November 20, 1869. Published in the "Herald," during the session of the "National Woman's Rights Convention."

"I'm a Cripple"

You're a Cripple! So it seems;
Though within your eye there gleams
Some suspicion of a ray
On the game that "cripples" play,
When their pitiable plight
They obtrude upon our sight.
Tricky Cripples!

Are you crippled? Well suppose
You are really one of those
Who have been reduced by Fate
To this desperate estate.
What is there about your case,
Meriting especial grace,
Mr. Cripple?

You are crippled? So are we:—
Mentally, financially,
And, perhaps, the truth to tell,
Morally, sometimes, as well,
We have lost those higher powers,
That once rightfully were ours.
Worst of Cripples!

Look around you, Man, and see
All your crippled company:—
See the feet, that, fast or slow,
Will not lead where we would go;
And the hands that powerless fall,
When we seek to grasp our all:—
Hopeless Cripples!

Paralyzed by coward fears;
Bent beneath the weight of years;
Crippled by our weakling wills;
Maimed by Life's unnumbered ills;
Hand and foot, and heart and brain,
Join your pitiful refrain,
Beggared Cripple!

Let us, then, endure our fate:
Time will end it, soon or late.
Whether without cause for blame,
Or, as punishment, it came,
Let us, bearing loss and pains,
Make the most of what remains:—
Patient Cripples!

The Difference

Twin Brothers, have been called the Sleeps of Life
And Death: So like in seeming, form, and guise,
That each of each is counterpart, and might
His absent Brother personate. And yet
So wide the difference between the Two—

Such their disparity of mein and state,
Their natures so opponent and diverse,—
That even real semblance they have none.
In Sleep, the Soul within its tenement
Of rudely-tempered or refined clay,
Apart retires. Closes each avenue,
Each gate, and door, and portal from without;
Calls in the very watch-dogs; and draws down
Each curtain that prevents a gaze within.
And all without is blank, and bare, and still;
With only breath ascending,—like the smoke
Of lonely farm-house,—to give any sign
Or token of an occupant within.
And yet, behind the walls the fires still burn,
And though the lamp of Reason dimly gleams,
The household duties in their due routine
Are all performed; and in their wonted course
The household servitors pursue their ways,
In dumb obedience to the laws of Life,
Until the Master once again comes forth,
And bids the halls be opened to the light,
And sends his powers abroad to meet the day.
Whereas, at Death the Mansion's Inmate yields
A quit-claim of his right to the estate;
Relinguishes his lease of the domain:
By ways unseen, dismisses every guest,
And all the faithful servants of his will
Who lived to do his bidding. Then the fires
Are all extinguished, and the lights turned out;
And the mysterious Soul locks, bolts, and bars
The Dwelling's every entrance; renders to Death this key—

Forsakes the premises he once called "home,"
And takes his journey whither no one knows.
Then all the chambers which the Living Self
Had once inhabited; wherein it roamed,
And wrought or rested as beseemed it best;
The brilliant halls where mirth and song had oft
Resounded, and grave Thought sometimes discoursed
With eloquence resistless; and anon
Some passon or emotion ruled the hour,
Are desolate and silent: nothing stirs
Within their precincts; only dust and mould
Accumulate; the bloom and freshness fade
From scenes they once adorned; like the bright hues
Of summer sunset clouds on mountain heights,
Their beauty vanishes. And all too soon
Crumble the solid walls, and in decay
And ruins the once glorious fabric falls.

The Sentinel of the Ages

Under shining, under shadow,
At the gates of every land,
All adown the lengthening ages,
Men have seen a Sentry stand;
Looming grandly on the beauty
Of the blue day's crystal light,
Then anon, in darkness blending
With the mystery of night;
While his meditations linger
Over glories that are past,

And his keen prophetic vision
Sees the good to come, at last.

At the portals of some nations,
We behold him, as he stands
Pale and haggard, weak and weary,
With his grey head in his hands,
Bowed in retrospective sorrow,
For the infamy and scorn,
For the ages of oppression
By his people meekly borne;
Till his features are transfigured
In a blaze of wrath divine,
And his glassy eyes brim over
With their bitter burning wine.

At another gate we see him,
In the vigor of full prime
Mounted on a stalwart courser,
For some charge or quest sublime:
Be it to go forth to battle,
In a cause of righteous strife,
Winning liberty, or glory,
With the purchase of his life.
Or, at least, to gain his guerdon,
And be named among the great,
By the aid of wealth's distinction,
Or some service to the State.

Otherwhere, we see him, seated
Underneath the arches vast
Of some old arcade, surrounded
With the records of the past.

Over ancient tomes he ponders,
Filled with figures rude and strange,
Yet their contents he deciphers
Through Time's labyrinthine range;
Then to poesy he turneth
And in numbers sweet recites;
Or he wakes the soul of music
In the harp whose chords he smites.

Once again we see him, crouching
On a devastated strand,
Silent as the Sphinx of Egypt
Billowed in its surging sand,
For the lash of persecution,
Heedless of all human right
Fell upon him, watching, waiting,
Till he sank beneath its might.
And he lies there, bruised and bleeding
But a brave old hero still,
Hoping for his destined future,
When his Fate has wrought its will.

Nations, do you know this Sentry,
Keeping guard, for ages long,
Over learning, arts, religion,
Through all cruelty and wrong?
Patient under dire oppression,
While the iron pierced his soul;
With no armor for protection;
With no weapon but a Scroll—
His one treasure; hear him crying,
"Though I die, let this be true!"
Is not his the voice of Jacob?
Yes! it is—it is—the Jew!

Say you that his crime demanded
Punishment from God and men?
Nay! With God alone be vengeance:
He is merciful. But when
Man metes out his ruthless judgments,
With a mad presumption blind,
He wreaks cruelties of demons
On the weaker of his kind.
It is not for his defection
That the Jew has met the sword:
Christians slay their fellow-Christians,
In the name of their own Lord.

Has he sinned—this Jew immortal?
Ay; but he is not alone:
Christ is crucified forever
In the House He calls His own.
Multitudes bow down before Him
And profess to own his sway,
While their hearts are filled with idols,
And they, Judas-like, betray
Him who comes as their Messiah,
And their fealty would claim;
But they pierce His soul with sorrows,
Shouting praises to His name.

Sinned the Jew? Well; he has suffered.
When he saw his judgment come
He bowed meekly to his sentence
Like the shorn lamb, he was dumb:
Bearing shame, contempt, revilings,
Grief and anguish, pain and death;
Only saying: "God is holy:

He is One," with latest breath.
Like to Christ, in his submission
He has met a martyr's fate;
But his resurrection cometh;
Though it can tarry, he can wait.

Yea! Already we perceive him,
Rising up on every hand;
Gliding into power and station,
With the world's wealth at command.
In the forum, in the senate,
Lo! he wins immortal fame.
Halls of learning, marts of commerce,
Ring with echoes of his name,
On each plane of high endeavor
He is foremost in the strife
Culling everlasting laurels
From the battlefields of Life.

So God's ancient, chosen people
As His Sentinel still stands
With the standard of Jehovah
In his strong, uplifted hands;
With his jewelled breastplate gleaming
On his proudly heaving chest;
And a lamp forever burning,
On his helmet's lofty crest:
While he welcomes the down-trodden
To his hospitable shores,
And in streams of richest bounty
Blessings on his breathren pours.

Standing thus, as great exemplar
To the world, the Jew appears:
Bringing hope, as well as warning,
To Humanity's late years.
Showing how, as King, God ruleth,
When mankind would test His sway,
Yet is tender as a Father,
When, as children, they obey.
Prophet, statesman, warrior, scholar,
Israel's glories shall increase,
When he claims his royal birthright;
Brother to the Prince of Peace.

Tekos---(The Tramp)

Dig me a grave!
Go now!
In grassy shadows by some gentle stream
Whose cadenced voice shall soothe my endless dream
And where the water-willow's golden bough
O'er it may wave,
Go, dig my grave.

And dig it deep;
That so
The weight of earth upon my heaving breast
Shall crush its throbbing pulse at last to rest;
Then to the blest retreat I'll gladly go;
Into it creep
And try to sleep.

Go quickly! Why
Delay?
When no more use upon the earth is found
For such as I, why cumber we the ground
Through the long hours of a single day?
Then such as I
Can only die.

Who owns this World?
Not God.
He made the lovely earth, 'tis said, and then
Bestowed the wondrous gift on mortal men.
But some men's portion dwindles to a sod:
The men by birth,—
And not in worth.

But this methinks
I must
Instinctively believe—though there can be
No spark of hope, in any faith, for me,—
That if he had not cast the earth away
Given up His right
To the dear light,

He would be kind
Nor so
For lack of food and shelter crowd me, weak,
And helpless, from the world, to seek
In the dark earth to hide and end my woe,
And refuge find
For my dark mind.

Were I man's hound
Or horse
Not thus would I be left in wretchedness,
Full fed, well-tended, sheltered, valued, blest,
Exultant, I would run my happy course
Nor sink from sound
Into the ground.

Oh! but to be
A beast
A fierce, wild creature with courageous blood
Roaming the forest, stemming the dark flood
Daily at Nature's ample board to feast
And still to be
Wild, strong, and free.

"Once I had wealth?"
Oh Yes!
And that I squandered it your blame
Writes an eternity of shame.
I grant you my whole life is senselessness
But whose the crime
I do not guess.

An Invitation

'Tis said by those who are inclined
To undervalue womankind
That no amount of wit and learning
Avails a Woman for discerning
The Spirit of a Joke; nor can she tell
Its story, though she knows it very well.

So, that we may this charge repel,
And prove that we good Jokes can tell,
You are respectfully invited
To come and see this great wrong righted;
In order whereunto, please bring with you
A Joke to tell, and prove the charge untrue.

Grandfather Monkey

My Master! My Master, pray come along with me
Don't think thou art leading me
Tis I leading thee.
I get thee thy pennies, thou owest me thy pelf,
And besides and moreover, I have given thee thyself.

For back in the ages, before Man became
I was his ancestor born without a name,
Monkeydom developed all the deeds that thou hast done,
For I am Grandfather, and thou my grandson!

Prayer

As the Musselman's Rug, while he sayeth his prayer,
Is fabled to carry him off through the air,
So from our Church-carpet our prayers shall arise,
And our heartfelt petition soar up to the skies.

The "Judge's" Case

Maud Muller—so the story goes—
In a shabby hat, and ragged clothes,
For some old farmer raked the hay,
In the broiling sun, through the livelong day.
She would rather "work out" she often said
Than wash the dishes and bake the bread.
She sang as she worked, and she wondered when
The farmer's "hand," "that awkward Ben,
Would sidle up again like a fool"
To walk with her home from singing school.

And a certain judge who lived in town—
So the story says—came riding down,
And seeing the girl beside the brook
Considered her worthy a second look;
And so without pausing a moment to think,
He drew in his bridle, and asked for a drink.
And Maud got the cup that was used by her Ben
And all the rest of the unwashed men.

Now the judge was as neat as neat could be
For a most fastidious man was he,
His dress and person in all details
To the tips of his shapely finger nails
Were perfectly kept, and daintily graced
With the scrupulous care of a faultless taste.
Of course the judge thanked her—What else could he do
Though he wished she had rinsed out the cup it is true.

Pellegrina Rondinella

(The following is a translation of a little Italian poem written by Tommaso Grossi.)

Wandering swallow,
Who in soft strain
Daily reneweth
Thy mournful refrain,
Wherefore, oh swallow
Dost thou camplain?

Art thou forsaken?
Has thy mate flown?
Like me, in sorrow
Art thou alone?
Weep on, then, swallow,
Desolate one!

Yet thou hast some solace;
The lake thou mayst skim;
Or, soaring, encircle
The mountain peaks dim;
All day long, swallow,
Calling to him.

In durance I languish;
These walls deny me
The sunlight, and even
The breath of the free:
Scarce my moan reaches,
Swallow, to thee.

Soon with the summer
Thou wilt take flight;
Distant lands greeting

Whose waters of light,
And verdant hills, swallow,
Gladden the sight.

While I still awaking
To new tears each morn,
Shall hear on the bleak winds
Thy tender notes borne,
As 'mid the snows, swallow,
I linger forlorn.

A cross o'er my ashes
Will rise in the Spring;
On it at evening
Folding thy wing,
Sing to me, swallow,
Peace to me sing.

Bereaved

My Beautiful Boy? Oh no!
It is absolute madness to lose him so.
My son must stay,
Till the end of my day,
My Life's one joy,
My glorious Boy!

My heart could never be reconciled
To the final loss of my only child!
So often have I felt such blows before
That now my stricken spirit can endure no more:
And yet this shaft has sped;
My Boy is dead! dead! dead!

The River-King

Tempt not the mystic spell which lies
In waves that roll, swift-murmuring
To meet the sea; they softly sing
And to their fitful shadows bring
Whom e'er they will, nor heed those left
Forever, lonely and bereft.

Where flows the sunlit river by,
Grown weary with the day's demands
I bent, one evening, on the sands
To cool my brow and tired hands,
And watch the far-off ripples run
Where sea and river melt in one.

My little boy knelt by my side
And, baby-fashion, laughed to see
The wavelets curl about his knee,
That ringing laugh of childish glee!
In all sweet sounds it lives again,
And stirs my heart to deeper pain.

I wove a wreath of slender ferns
And laid it on his shining head.
"I crown thee River-King," I said.
(The gold that lights the ocean's bed
Is not more bright than was his hair—
Earth held no child than he more fair.)

And then along the level shore
I went, the boy upon my breast,
His dimpled cheek to mine close-pressed.
In long slant rays, from furthest west,

The great red sun, slow dropping down
With jewels lit the dewy crown.

And when the early twilight fell,
And landward from the shadowed sea
Its mighty voices came to me
Deep fraught with solemn mystery,
I wooed, with drowsy lullabies,
Soft slumber to his dreamful eyes.

The meaning of the whispered calls
And signals dim, or flashing white,
Was hidden from my clouded sight!
I saw the slumberous eyes grow bright
With sudden joy, and clear and wide
Look down upon the restless tide.

I saw, but could not read the signs!
The beckoning hands but seemed to me
Pale mists in-creeping from the sea;
Or laughing waves, that in their glee
Came dancing up the glistening sand
To toss their spray upon the land.

But never warning came that he
Whose light heart beat against my own,
Before the morrow would be gone
Forever from me; that, alone
And hopeless, I must pace the shore,
And, save in dreams, should feel no more

The tender touch of baby lips—
No thought that I must mourn the day
When on my boy's bright tresses lay

The fatal crown, and weeping say:
"The words I spake in idle jest
Have robbed my life of joy and rest!"

When summer days are clear and warm,
Far down, beneath the water's glare,
With love too faithful for despair,
I watch the gleam of shining hair
Swift glancing by, with golden light,
And passing ever from my sight.

I left him once with good-night kiss;
But now, when darkening waters swell
Upon the strand, I cry, "Farewell!"
And listening catch the far sweet knell
That sounds in faintest melody,
An answer from the distant sea.

Hope Embalmed

Encased within the Amber's hold,
As though in pale, transparent gold,
A hapless insect died;
Beating, from pearly wings, the scales
Whose cloud-like stream beneath it trails,
Caught by the solid tide.

So, too, a Hope, once soared, elate,
And met by overwhelming Fate,
Died, struggling with Despair:
And Memory, when ceased its pain,—
With vain Regrets in dusky train,—
Embalmed it, changeless, there.

Respectfully dedicated to the New York Microscopical Society.
July 8, 1895.

The Coming Men

Grave, and wise, and potent Seniors,
Busy with your plans and cares,
Pause, and listen to the echoes
Floating by you unawares.
Like the rush of mighty surges,
As on distant sands they beat,
Sounds the tramping, tramping, tramping,
Of the swift, unresting feet
Of the Nation's future Men:
Countless and resistless legions
Of the Coming Men.

Oh ye weary, toiling millions,
Ye shall lay your burdens down.
Ye must leave your priceless treasures
Who have won ambition's crown.
And the coming men will labor
With a new and matchless might.
Working never heard of wonders,
Gaining heights of glory bright
With the clear light shining then,
Strong, and brave, and fresh, and eager,
Are the Coming Men.

They will take your places, Soldiers,
Marching o'er the battle plain;
They will sail your ships, oh Sailors,
To and fro upon the main.
Rulers, statesmen, poets, heroes,
All your laurels they will claim,
And, alas, ye evil-doers,

Some will also share your shame.
Hark! the echoes swell again;
Growing louder still as nearer
Press the Coming Men.

What Do They Think?

When the first sunbeams in summer,
Pour through every chink
Crack and crevice of the stable
Waking from their comfortable
Slumbers all the stout car horses
Pray what do they think?

Do they dread the dreary labors
Of the coming day?
Are they lost in computations
Of the numerous vexations
And the miles of toilsome travel
That before them lay?

And amid the wild commotion
Of the busy street,
Slaving through the din and bustle
Panting in each nerve and muscle
Stifled with the yellow dust cloud
Reeking with the heat,

Do they think with fruitless longings
Of the happy hours
When their view of life was bounded
By the fences that surrounded
Meadows where they cropped contented
Dewy grass and flowers?

The Last Amen

Ah! yes! There was music entrancing,
  Full of echoes from heaven it seemed;
With incense like breathing of angels;
  While as calm glowing stars softly beamed
The lights from the columns and arches
  And the blossoming altar: and when
Fell the balm of the priest's benediction
  There rolled back a full wave of "Amen!"

Then vanished the saintly procession,
  In its splendor of red, white and gold;
And the dense, surging sea of the people
  Ebbed away. And then silent and cold,
As the lights, one by one, were extinguished,
  Slowly waving their wings on the air,
Crept the ghosts of man's sins and his sorrows,
  Who are laid by no magic but prayer.

Yet there lingered one desolate figure,
  Lowly kneeling before the great shrine,
Where the red taper ceaselessly burning
  Points the soul to the life-spark divine:—
Alone with its pain or its penance,
  And the shades of the pillars, in gloom
Like a forest, at midnight, in winter,
  Keeping guard at the gates of a tomb.

So a Heart, in life's temple, remaineth,
  All alone when life's service is o'er,
And the lights, and the incense, and music
  Its weak pulses can quicken no more.

But at last comes the peace of submission:—
"Now I go," says the Heart, "and what then?"
"Let us pray!" breathes a Voice, from the darkness:
And the failing Heart falters—"Amen!"

In the Manger

Old Egypt's priests to Apis bowed,
A sable beast, their type of God;
And Egypt's people, bruitsh crowd
At fast and feast
Worshipped the Beast,
And trembled at a bullock s nod.
For so did Memphian darkness shroud
That ancient land with baleful cloud.

Assyria, in monstrous guise,
The blendid shapes of beasts and men,
Reveals her gods to mortal eyes.
Chaldea's store
Of starry lore,
The wisdom of her wisest, then
Could find no fitter forms than these
To symbolize her deities.

In Bethlehem, one solemn night
The cattle in their stable stood,
Where morning's dawn disclosed to sight
A Babe divine
Of royal line,
The fruit of virgin motherhood,
That in the oxen's manger lay
On that our primal Christmas Day.

Birthday Greetings

To Miss Bright

Bright though thy life has ever been, fair Maiden
And though we trust that peace, and hope, and light,
May cheer thy heart however sorrow-laden,
It travels onwards to life's peaceful night:
Yet it is doubtful, whether in our blindness,
It would be wise, considerate, or right,
Or showing you a particle of kindness
To wish that Fate may keep you—always—"Bright."

Who Knows Why?

Ned is nothing but a Baby:
Who can tell the reason why
Though his curly head is golden,
And he has a bright blue eye,
Ned has neither wit nor wisdom,
And can only laugh and cry.

Now a horse is strong, and carries
Heavy burdens, with all ease,
And the hound runs very swiftly,
While birds fly among the trees.
But if anybody knows it,
Let him tell us if you please,
Why Ned should not be able
To do such things as these.

The Viking's Burial*

The ship of the Viking lay moored to the shore,
Awaiting the Master, whose prowess of yore,
Had carved with its keel his dread pathway of war.
But the Viking, henceforth, shall command it no more.

It rocked, all day long, on the swell of the tide;
Now dipping its prow, and now laving its side:
While men came and went, and strange tasks in it plied;
Then left it alone, still at anchor to ride.

Meanwhile the pale sun through the heavens slid down;
The craggy cliffs beetled, with ominous frown;
And, from the huge grave of a chief of renown,
Crept shadows, like ghosts which the sea could not drown.

In a daring foray had this Chieftain been slain:
And a hollow was scooped in the sand of the plain,
Where, packed in his vessel, this King of the Main,
'Neath a vast mound of earth, had for centuries lain.

*The funeral of a Viking chief was a barbaric ceremony. A slight excavation was made on the coast, into which his ship was lowered. The prow turned seaward. A sepulchral cabin was prepared in the center, and the body, lying on a sledge, decked in state attire, ornaments and full panolpy of arms, was then introduced, and the opening closed with layers of birch bark; all other personal possessions were laid in other parts of the gigantic coffin, which was packed

The mists from the waters now shrouded the sun;
And to the beach came, from afar, one by one,
A throng who awaited some deed to be done;
In awe, yet impatient to have it begun.

Then down the steep hillside a slow train drew near,
With moanings and wailings, most grevious to hear.
And foremost was carried a Form, on a Bier;
While well-loaded sledges brought up the long rear.

The vessel was reached; the dead Viking arrayed
In splendor barbaric, within it was laid;
In panoply full, for the fight to be made
With the ghosts that would drive from Valhalla his Shade.

to the top with moss and blue clay, which is said to be a peculiarly good preservative against decay. His horses and dogs were killed and placed against the sides, and finally earth piled over all in form of a lofty mound. This was done very near the shore, so that even after death the shadow of the sea-rover might frown upon his chosen element. Occassionally, however, the vessel and its owner were burned together to the water's edge. A tradition has come down concerning one of those dauntless warriors that when he felt the hand of death upon him he ordered his ship to be filled with combustible material and ignited, the sail set seaward, and there, alone upon his funeral pyre, the spray of ocean for his chrism, the winds his ministers, his unconquered spirit fled to the Valhalla of his faith.—"Norway Nights and Prussian Days." by S. M. Henry Davis, 1887.

Around him thus lying in state, grimly graced,
His treasured possessions in order were placed:
His weapons of warfare; his shields rudely traced;
And all the rare stores that his trophies embraced.

His dogs and his horses, though slaughtered and stark,
Were shipped as aforetime the beasts in the Ark.
Then the vessel was packed full of mosses and bark,
And with sail setting seaward, swung round, in the dark.

A thrill through it ran, for one moment of fear;
Then a breeze filled the sail, and without lurch or veer,
It sprang on its course, with the leap of a deer:
Though with none to command it; nor pilot to steer.

Then down through the air, from a rock's jutting height,
Sped a burning torch, hurled by stern muscles of might.
It fell on the deck; set the mosses alight;
And the pyre funeral flamed on the night.

For the last dying words the old Viking had said,
Were to order that thus, when his bold spirit fled,
In the depths of the sea, should be pillowed his head,
And the ocean he loved, be forever his bed.

The Months of the Year

January

Facing two ways alike, in doubt, I stand,
And in both ways, at once, I fain would go:
For Memory, with soft detaining hand,
Recalls me to the Past. But Hope cries, "No!
You may no longer linger. I command
The progress of the Future." Even so,
With longing gaze fixed on a fading land,
I follow Hope, with footsteps weak and slow.

February

Now February breaks the icy chains
Wherewith the Winter's tyranny had bound him;
And with impetuous winds, and reckless rains,
He rolls his devastating floods around him.
So, too, the Champions of Freedom's cause,
With wild reforms, and ill-advised lustrations,
May, by destroying good, with evil, laws,
Imperil the great destinies of Nations.

March

Old March was a Savage, all grizzled and grim,
For stormy and bitter had Life been to him.
On the cold barren Earth, in his infancy cast,
He had struggled, alone, with each blustering blast;
Until came the sunshine of Truth, from above,
And melted his Spirit to patience and love.
Then his leonine Soul became lamb-like and mild,
And the reasoning Man had the heart of a Child.

April

When April comes, the dormant Earth
Wakes to a new creation's birth,
She sends the green waves up the hills,
Whence silver streams roll down their rills;
Her call brings beasts, and birds, and bees,
Swarming to life, from fields and trees.
Earth must the fabled Phoenix be
To yield this yearly Mystery.

May

A bright blue bird, from the bending skies,
  May flutters on cloudy wings;
The light of the dawn in her shining eyes;
  Her soul in the song she sings.
She scatters the dews from her outspread wings;
  And blossoms from heaven above,
Wide over the waiting world she flings,
  For May is the Heart of Love.

June

A radiant Maid from Paradise,
  Who earthward wills to stray,
Holds yearly court in woodland wilds,
  Lured by the songs of May.
She brings us Beauty's very Self;
  She sets our Souls atune;
And at her rose-gemmed Throne we fall
  Entranced, and worship June.

July

Mother of Bounties! Dame July!
  Thy treasuries our wants supply.

What harvests deck thy golden fields!
What gracious fruits thy culture yields!
What joyous days thy ministries provide,
To cheer Life's journeys, over hill and tide,
To render thee their grateful thanks for these,
Thy happy children cluster at thy knees.

August

The Months, as other Maidens do,
Sometimes don strange disguises:
So August to a Mermaid turned,
As one of her surprises.
She said the land would stifle her:
She loved the deep sea-reaches.
And then she dived and swam away:—
And now she haunts the Beaches!

September

September pale, in hazy veil,
And misty mantle, dimly shrouded,
By winding rills, climbs terraced hills
With opal light half over-clouded;
Where she explores her vineyards' stores,
With potent purple clusters gleaming.—
All day she sips the grapes' sweet lips;
And then beneath the stars lies dreaming.

October

October, brilliant, mountain-born,
Cottage or Castle could adorn.
With buoyant steps the gladsome morn he meets.
Each crag the music of his horn repeats.

He hunts and fishes; scales the cliff's steep sides,
And braves the dangers of the foaming tides.
Then, the day done, beneath the full-orbed moon,
He strikes his lute, and softly sings—to June.

November

Tearful November wanders, shivering,
Before the storm, from out a dismal Past,
And sees, with every heartstring quivering,
Her treasures swept, like leaves, before the blast.
Through time untold, the sport of adverse Fate,
She seeks Life's shores, where, spent and desolate,
She sinks upon the sands, at close of day;—
And breakers bear her lifeless Form away.

December

His brow serene, crowned with a wreath of snow,
December waits, to his long home to go.
In cheerful labors has his life been spent:—
Or, if he erred, he hastened to repent
Throughout the world, from east to glowing west,
His festive gifts both great and small have blest.
And when his gentle breath, on Earth, shall cease,
Like a pure snow-flake, it will fall as Peace!

Mud-Sill Melodies---No. 1

The Breeze from the Gutter

Among the sad scenes of the city
  Betokening misery dire,
None moves our disgust or our pity
  Much more than the wretch in the mire.
What a picture for painter or poet;
  What a text for the clergy to con;
What a point for the sapient statesman
  To base legislation upon,
Is this product of civilization
Prophetic of worse degradation:
This outcast, in wretchedness utter,
Reposing, dead drunk in the gutter!

The small boy stands by, early learning
  A lesson in life's wicked lore;
Some woman, with pause of sad yearning,
  The form of lost manhood scans o'er.
Then gathers the rabble around him,
  As ever blood particles run
To a wound or a bruise of the body
  When physical mischief is done:
Such a crowd being but a congestion,
That proves beyond cavil or question,
How the pulse of Humanity flutters
Round the ulcerous souls in its gutters.

But the Priest and the Levite pass by him;
  And no good Samaritan comes,
And then the policemen espy him,
  For they are out gunning for bums.

The whole of their scant ammunition,—
  Which is quite insufficient, be sure,—
Not being great pounds of prevention,
  But sundry small ounces of cure.
And they hustle him off, 'mid the laughing
Of hoodlums who goad him with chaffing,
Till the wretch incoherently mutters:
"Yesh! drunk on the breeze from the gutters!"

That he never had father or mother.
  Of course common reason affirms;
Nor kindred to claim him as brother;—
  In the ethical sense of the terms.
He is but the one sheep of a hundred,
  That, perhaps, has been fleeced of its gold;
A black one, all mangy, gone straying
  From Reverend Somebody's fold.
But to be folded now at the Station,
In horrible, dark isolation,
Unless some kind angel shall flutter
White wings over mud from the gutter.

But ah! other gutters are teeming:
  And some of the foul ones seem nice;
For perfumes delicious are streaming
  From gay, gilded gutters of vice.
In halls of luxurious splendor
  Pollution and pestilence breed:
And dissolute children begotten
  Of deadly corruption and greed,
With the mists up the mountain ascending,
And the pure breath of ocean, are blending,
Under cover of Fashion's gay flutter,
The breezes that reek of the gutter.

O Beauty, in satins and laces,
  Sweet Siren, who lures to destroy,
O charmer, endowed with all graces,
  What arts to ensnare you employ!
In the souls of your victims you fasten
  Your cruelly venomous fangs,
And poison their lives with no pity
  For any heart's consequent pangs.
You madden, intoxicate, deaden,
The creatures with consciences leaden,
Who quaff, to delirium utter,
The breezes that sweep from your gutter.

When faculties fine are degraded,
  And talents thrown madly away
For basest of appetites jaded,
  Who could lower levels essay?
And when sheep go astray in high places—
  Society's mountains of Sin,
Whose sides are deep-seamed with the gullies
  That torrents of vice have cut in—
Lost manhood, in such lofty station,
Needs more than the slum's condemnation;
For the one place of obloquy utter
Is the trough of Society's gutter.

A Valentine

Would you of Life the utmost make,
And those fine symphonies awake
Which mind and muscle well combine,
Then, for your "Understanding's" sake,
With cautious prudence, wisely take
Saint Crispin for your Valentine.

Mud-Sill Melodies---No. 2

The Cry of the Curbstone Baby

"O Mother, dear Mother, I'm frantic;
Your music has never beguiled
The hours of desperate anguish
That make up the life of your child.
But, contrariwise, it has deadened
The pulses of infancy gay,
And all the bright visions of childhood
It has chased from my fancy away.

"For here, covered close on your bosom,
From morning till nightfall I lie,
With scarcely a glimpse of the sunshine,
Or a glance at the crowd going by:
While you grind away at your organ,
And make the old fiend pent within
Add the shriek of his terrible tortures
To the streets unendurable din.

"With polkas and waltzes I'm giddy;
The schottisches make my head swim;
And I feel unaccountably wicked
When I hear any pious old hymn.
In the Sweet Bye and Bye, if such music
Is played on the Beautiful Shore,
I'll not steer for the heavenly regions,
When the grinding of Life's tune is o'er.

"I hate the gay Star Spangled Banner,
Though I really can not say why:
And I wish the far-famed Swanee river
Would run itself utterly dry.

While as for the maidens and lovers
Whose cases are all so forlorn,
And that Jo, with his small Annie Rooney,
I wish they had never been born!

"Must Washington's March be eternal?
And Bonaparte's Alps ever rise
Till over their towering summits
He crosses them into the skies?
Will Grandfather's Clock be kept running,
Regardless of gladness or gloom,
Till the strains of the last Hail Columbia
Salute the dread hour of doom?

"There! Don't play Sweet Home, I beseech you!
It drives me ferociously wild,
When I am a poor curbstone baby,
A homeless, wee vagabond child.
Pray, Mother dear, how did it happen,
That we are not people at all,
But just clay like the bricks of the pavement,
Or stones, like the blocks in the wall?

"Look, Mother! Just look at the children,
In laces and ribbons so fine,
Like beautiful quaint little ladies:
Then, see the poor rags that are mine!
And there is that dear, dainty baby,
Rolled along, every day, by the maid;
While I, in your arm of cast-iron,
Shall smother to death, I'm afraid.

"Please, Mother, do get me a buggy,
And trundle me out to the Park;

In the glorious sunshine, remember
Not when we go home, after dark.
Lay me down there 'mid grasses and flowers.
To roll about just as I will,
That my paralyzed limbs may recover
From lying, such ages, so still.

"Oh! if we but had a home proper,
Where you could do sewing, and cook,
And I have a precious doll-baby,
A cradle, and bright picture book,
How lovely would life be before us,
Though ever so humble our home:
And how much more seemly, and Christian,
Than thus, as poor vagrants, to roam!

"Why is it we can not be human?
Why must you sit grinding, all day,
Like a senseless mechanical figure,
Your wild, curbstone music, I pray?
While here in your lean, withered bosom,
Whose fountain has long been quite dry,
Close-swathed in your old, faded mantle,
A brown weasened mummy am I.

"Why mother! you seem to be crying:
Your tears splash upon me like rain.
If my moanings make you so unhappy
Your baby no more shall complain.
As through my whole pitiful lifetime
I've been good and quiet before,
Hereafter stone-still as a statue,
I'll lie in your arms, evermore.

" 'Tis not all for myself, though, nor chiefly
About my own fate, that I care,
While you sit here grinding your life out,
Benumbed in your silent despair.
And when I can see that your music
Makes you no less wretched than I,
I wish there were some tune invented
Sad enough to make both of us die.

"But I can not endure it much longer;
I'm growing so feeble and thin
That scarcely a pulse is left beating
My fluttering bosom within.
So—some day—there'll be a small inquest;
And then the wise coroner's art,
Will find that your maddening music
Has broken your poor Baby's heart."

Peace on Earth

Then were the Angels glad, that blessed night,—
To men most blessed of all nights whose stars
Have ever trembled o'er our fallen race,—
When, watching from their stations in the sky,
Over beloved Zion, and the town
Of Jesse's royal Son, the mandate came
From Him who ruleth the whole universe,
From central heart to last circumference:
"Ye Messengers of Mercy, haste away,
Glad tidings of great joy proclaim to Men;
Go to Judea's darkened plains, and cry
With 'Gloria in Excelsis,' 'Peace on Earth.' "

Glad, though perchance amazed, the heavenly Ones
Sped on their mission to the war-worn world,
Now pausing midst its centuries of strife;
Nor stayed they in their course upon the heights
Of those fair mountains which like walls enclosed
Holy Jerusalem, to shine, and shout
Their gladsome tidings through the silent night,
And stir the pulses of a slumbering world;
But, swift, descended to the lowly plains
Where fleecy flocks were folded, and their watch
The shepherds kept, amid the dewy gloom
And solemn calm of Ephrath's storied fields.

There blazed the splendors of the angelic host,
Flooding with radiance all the night serene,
As in celestial symphony they sang,
Now soft, and sweet, and low; now in a strain
Majestic and exultant, full and strong,
And in harmonious cadence echoing,
The wondrous Anthem, written in the skies,
And breathing benison of Love divine;
Glory to God on high, and Peace to Men;
In highest Heaven now let God be praised,
For Peace, long exiled from terrestrial shores,
Shall find a home in human hearts again.

Peace! blessed word! In that auspicous hour
The tranquil Heavens echo with its tone,
Familiar there, and native to that sphere;
And Earth, reverberant, returns the sound

In wondering doubt, and awed astonishment.
So long have strife and anguish shared man's
soul,
Scarce in his dreams he heareth, Peace be still:
So long have hatred, war, and carnage ruled
Over the tribes of Earth, and steeped her fields
In blood of raging brethren, that the word
Commanding peace, stirs Heaven, and Earth,
and Hell,
And Satan trembles for his sovereignty.

Peace! for the Prince of Peace has come to
reign
Over His own; to bring His Peace to them;
To teach the way of Peace unto the meek;
To heal the broken-hearted, and distill
The dews of Peace, in arid souls of men:
To lead the nations into paths of Peace,
And in its bonds unite their brotherhood,
Not as the World, He giveth to his own;
His blessed benediction is the Peace
Which passeth understanding; yea, He keeps
In perfect Peace the soul that trusts in him.

Yet, where there is no Peace, and should be
none,
There say it not. Peace is for them alone
Who seek it, and pursue the paths thereof;
For those who prize the things which make for
Peace
And unto it belong. No peace is there,
Nor can there be, with Satan, and with wrong,
No peace is for the wicked; for the foe

That lurks in Self and Sin, a sword instead.
Here must a Peace be conquered; only so,
The Victors shall depart in Peace, and rest
In it until at the Last day they rise
Spotless and blameless, and are found in Peace.

Fresh Wine

Oh the wine! The red, red, wine!
When the vine-leaves drip with dew,
And the grapes grow bright in the arrowy light
That pierces their sweetness through!
The Gods never quaffed more precious a draught
Than the pure, fresh, healthful wine,
Which a mortal sips from the musky lips
Of the moist blue cups on the vine.

Oh the wine! The sweet, sweet wine!
When the burning sun hangs high,
And the hills are white with a misty light,
In the shade of the vines I lie;
And idly think, and drink, and drink,
Mid the perfume round me shed,
While the low wind sings on golden strings
Through the grass that bends over my head.

Oh the wine! The bright, bright wine!
When the glowing western sky,
And the brilliant trees, in shadowy ease
On the motionless river lie!
Storing the blaze of the life-giving rays
The full grapes swell on the vine;
Then gather their bloom in the twilight gloom,
While the young moon's faint beams shine.

The Descent from the Cross

The Christ has suffered. After agonies
Too dread for knowledge or for naming, He
Has bowed His head, and breathed His spirit
forth;
And not a nerve with anguish now vibrates;
Nor does a muscle quiver with a pang.
The throes that shook His mortal frame have
passed;
Endurance claims no more. The nails, the spear,
The thorns distilling blood, have all their force
And potencies expended. Nevermore
Can aught create another thrill of pain
In that still Form, now gently disengaged
From its last cruel cross, and borne, in peace,
away.

So, mortal Sufferer, whoe'er thou be,
Or what the tortures that thy lot entails,
Amid the stress that seeks thy Soul's despair,
Take, for thy comfort, the full certainty
That no intensity of pain demands
Endurance always. Surely comes the hour
That brings to thee, as to the Christ was
brought,
Release from crucifixion: when shall cease
Thy Passion's pangs unutterable, borne
To their last limit; and thou, too, shalt be
Unfettered from thine instrument of woe,
And find surcease of griefs whose stings can
wound no more.

The Old Year's Burial

'Twas winter, and a sombre, gruesome night.
The fierce winds in their caves lay slumbering
After a wild day's work, yet breathing forth
Their icy breath upon the heavy air.
The sky was overcast with fleecy flecks
Of mottled grey, or plied with sable drifts
Of sullen clouds, floating confused, as though
The Soul of Darkness in mad rage had torn
Her vaporous garments into shreds, and flung
The tattered fragments in the face of Heaven.
There, swimming in those upper depths, they seemed
The dark debris of airy continents
Caught up and carried by the crystal bergs
That sail the vast aerial ocean's waste.

Within a forest, where the tallest trees
Stood closely serried in far-reaching lines,
Their mighty boles piercing the fields of snow
Like masts of some ill-fated squadron, lost
Long years ago, and half submerged, and now
Fast frozen in the night of Arctic Seas.
Or, like the naked skeletons they stood,
Those stalwart forms, of the Year's bravest sons,
Death-stricken, at the sight of wintry Doom
Turning the Summer's beauty into dust,
While stretching jointless arms of vain despair
To shield their humbler brethren of the sod:—

Here, in the dense of wood there rose a fane,
An old Cathedral with time-darkened walls,

And ruined arches, and a crumbling tower,
And mullioned windows with prismatic Saints
And fancied Angels in the shattered panes,
New martyrdoms enduring. Various shrines,
And altars manifold, were reared around,
And honored with unnumbered gifts and rites.
White-vested Choristers were there, and Priests
In black and white and gold and scarlet clad.
Here, through all ages, crowds of worshipers
Come, none know whence; tary awhile to pray,
Or sing their litanies, or tell their beads;
And when each several service is rehearsed,
They sink into the silent crypts beneath,
And others come, an endless flowing tide.

On this drear night a dismal dirge rang out
From broken bells in the Cathedral tower:
Bright beacons blazed before the entrance doors;
And torches flared in sconces on the walls.
On the high Altar burned funeral lamps,
And low before it lay a ponderous Corpse,
The stately Form of the Departed Year,
Calmly reposing in the Sleep of Death,
With lighted candles ranged from head to foot,
And purple pall, and canopy, enriched
With silver fringes, and pale blooming flowers.
Sad psalms were chanted; 'De profundis rolled
Its solemn surges through the vaulted aisles;
In melting minor strains the organ moaned,
As though the heart of Melody were faint;
The Priests read fitting words from Holy Book,

And many a prayer intoned; and every pause
The people filled with dolorous Amens.

At last the Requiem ended, and the bier
Was slowly borne along the shadowy aisle
And out into the silence of the night.
The capped and cassocked Priests, and Choristers
With tapers dimly burning, led the way:
And following the bier, with heads bowed down,
And dark robes trailing o'er the crusted snow,
The Mourners came, in sad procession formed.

Old Father Time, the Year's stern sire, was first,
With tottering steps, and leaning on his scythe,
His hourglass hidden in the ample folds
Of his old mantle, grey and threadbare grown;
While on his visage was a look which said:
"What if, as Chronos, I my children slay,
Shall I not work my will upon mine own?
While I have power who shall hinder me?
They seek my life, ungrateful sons! Alas,
That One shall come who will not seek in vain!"
Then sank his aged head upon his breast,
And bitter tears ran down his hoary beard.
He seems to mourn the dead Year carried forth
To burial, and yet his sordid grief
Is solely for himself; for well he knows
That his own days are numbered; that the Book
Of changeless Destiny appoints the hour
When Time, decrepit now, shall be no more.

Him following, came groups of sorrowing Ones
Whose treasures the Old Year wrenched from their hold,
And now clasps closely in his rigid arms:
Friends, honors, fortunes, hopes, and happiness,
He seized, and crushed in his relentless grasp:
'Twas these the losers followed to the tomb.
Next, came a throng of sullen, angry souls
Who hated the dead Year for all the ills,
Afflictions, sorrows, burdens, pain, and shame,
That he, through all his days, had brought to them.
These seemed to mourn; and did; but not for him.
In muttered words they cursed the cruelty
Of him upon the bier, and gaspingly
Hurled imprecations at his crownless head.

Then, were there none who truly mourned the Dead?
Who sorrowed o'er the losing of a Friend,
And wept for him, the rather than themselves?
Who then are these, with slow, unwilling feet,
And muffled forms, and low, lamenting voice
Of those who wail in dreams? saying: "Old Year,
Return; bring back to us thy precious days,
And let us be thy patient, faithful slaves.
Oh leave us not, Old Year! Come back, once more!"
Ah, these are they,—nor is their number few,

Though the dim darkness hides their sad
array,—
To whom the dead Year brought their Life's
last hopes,
Its latest opportunities for good;
And having scorned, and spurned, and squand-
ered these,
They know, too late, the worth of what is lost,
And smite their breasts in motion of despair.

Yet some there were, indeed, with tardy steps,
Slow-following in the rear; their eager glance
Turning to scan the gloom of eastern skies:
These paused, and whispering to each other,
said:
"Blessed forever be the memory
Of this propitious Year. He brought us peace,
And plenty, health, and hope, and joy; and took
No blessing from us, but has left a store
Of gracious promises, to be redeemed
By Him whose coming we await this hour:
The New Year. Let the Old Year rest in
peace!"
Thus said they; but they mourned not, nor
were sad;
Light were their hearts, their pulses beating
high;
They loved the dead Year for his benefits,
But better loved themselves: nor paid to him
The tribute of one grateful sigh or tear.

And if, in all that various multitude,
Any there were whose love for the dead Year,

The vanquished, fallen, impotent old Year,
Was separate from Self, and thought of gain;
Any amid that throng,—and surely some
There must have been; for still in human souls
Some attributes of Deity remain;—
Who loved the Old Year for his worth alone;
Who honored him, in spite of all his faults;
Who fondly pardoned weaknesses of will,
And blamed him not for what he took or gave;—
These kept their grief deep hidden in their hearts;
Their tearful eyes none noticed in the gloom;
No murmurs left their lips; they made no sign.

On, toward the West, across a frozen Stream,
The funeral train pursued its winding way,
Until at noon of that grim night it reached
The Mausoleum where Dead Years repose,
And whence those Specters of the Past come forth
That haunt the lives of miserable Men.
The weary Bearers rested here the bier,
And venerable Priests, in solemn tones,
Performed the last sad rites; while choristers,
In ranks arranged, with tapers held aloft,
In chants antiphonal sang benisons,
Till echoes rang through all the frosty air.

Then, as the sacred music rose and fell
In strains unequal, like the beat of waves
Which dash and break upon a rocky shore,
The night-winds woke, and sighed among the pines,

And rustled the dry leaves on shivering oaks,
And sobbed and groaned, in weird pathetic strains
Learned from the cries of restless, unblest ghosts;
And startled night-birds in the chorus joined,
Flapped their broad wings, and fluttering, flew around
With shrieks and screams of terrified affright.
Then, through a rifted cloud the pallid moon,
Rayless and dim, a feeble shadowy film,
Peered down upon the wide expanse of earth;
Gazed for awhile upon the fearful scene,
And then in sad amaze fled back again,
And hid bewildered in the depths of cloud.

For other sights beheld the wondering moon
Besides the burial of the dead Old Year.
She saw the land full-peopled everywhere,
With natives of all climes; of every race;
Of all conditions, stations, orders, ranks;
Barbarian, and courtier, saint, and sage;
In splendid garb arrayed, or clad in rags:—
And all their several vocations plied;
The votaries of science and the arts
Pursued their tasks; the crafty statesman planned;
The patient farmer tilled the rugged soil;
Shrewd traders bartered everything for gold;
Brigand and beggar sought for wealth unearned;
And men were building cities on the plains,
And rushing to and fro with reckless speed:

The brutish masses toiled like driven beasts,
Or idly skulked, and plotted desperate deeds:
Weak, vacant souls, in aimless wanderings
Were sadly lost; and heroes, grandly great,
Climbed slowly up the steep ascents of Fame.

Nor were these scenes all that the pale Moon saw.
Throughout the wood were groups of revellers,
Dancing to music, over sunken graves,
And reeling into them, no more to rise.
Men quarrelled with each other; murderers
Dispatched their hapless victims; maniacs raved;
And felons gnashed their teeth and clanked their chains.
Along the ground the dead and dying lay;
Some slew themselves, and many died of want,
Moaning in pain, or dumb with deeper woe,
While by the perishing knelt pitying friends,
With gentle ministries of small avail.
And some were digging graves for other dead,—
Dead hopes, dead hearts, death faiths, dead consciences,
And burying them deep; too deep for chance
Of future resurrection. Battles raged;
Fire, earthquakes, winds, and waves, destruction spread;
Prayers, tears, and imprecations, jests, and songs,
And laughter, in wild discords were confused:
A deafening din to stun the listening heavens.

These were the hideous, horrid, piteous sights
That the dim Moon gazed down upon; for so
The world was busied at that dismal hour.
It was a scene to make an Angel sad,
And, if he knew no more than mortal men,
To make him wonder who made wretched man;
Or whether God his creatures could forget;
Or He himself were dead as the Old Year.
Nor was it strange that when the Moon beheld
The dire confusion and distress on earth,
She fled away in headlong haste, afraid
Lest she should swoon, and fall into the world.

Now were the last words uttered o'er the Dead,
And the once mighty, honored, royal Year
Was lowered lifeless to the yawning depths
Of the deep vault in his imperial tomb;
And scarce had ruthless Father Time approached,
And barred the sepulcher's great door of stone,
On rusty hinges hung, and silently
Affixed his dreadful Seal, when on the night
The bells rang out from the Cathedral tower
In merry chimes; a thousand trumpets blared;
A thousand sudden lights flashed on the scene;
Rockets went hissing up into the air,
Blazing in lines of light athwart the skies,
And fell in showers of burning stars around.

Then from the East a train of thunderous cars
Came flying like a Dragon, breathing steam,

And staring with fierce eyes of flame, as on
It rolled, bringing another Year to rule the World.
Then cannon roared, and rent the air as though
The day of Doom, precipitate, had reached
The reckless Earth. And all its throats of brass
The monstrous Serpent opened, with such shrieks,
And harrowing screams, and dreadful yells, as if
Through some vast chasm, cleft to earth's central core.
The Lost in Hades had cried out in pain,
Their voices blending with the mock of fiends.

Then priests and people, all the funeral train,
Each with a torch set suddenly aflame,
Rushed shouting back, led on by Father Time,
To meet the Coming Year, and welcome him:
And in the old Cathedral, now adorned
And garlanded for festival, to hail
This unknown scion of an ancient house,
This Heir to all the Ages of the Past,
And seat him on the dead Year's royal throne.
And crown him as their heaven-appointed King,
Bending before him the obsequious knee.
God took the Dead: long may the Living live!

December, 1883.

Sir Pilgrim

A stranger stood in my doorway.
  His form I scarce could see,
For the night was dark and dreary.
  And wrapped in his cloak was he.

"Come out of the storm, O stranger?
  Come in to my fire," I cried;
But he stood in the darkened doorway,
  And never a word replied.

"Who art thou?" I demanded;
  "Whence comest thou to me?
And what is the quest, Sir Pilgrim,
  That hither bringeth thee?"

"I am one of the long succession
  Of passing Years," quoth he;
"I come from the nameless regions
  Of the vast eternity;

"I bring great store of treasure
  For earth, by Heaven designed;
And I come to gather tribute
  For Heaven of all I find."

"Alas! I have known thy brothers,
  Thou fateful Pilgrim Year!
And they brought such store of sorrow,
  That thee I needs must fear.

"But come out of the stormy darkness,
  Come under my low roof-tree;
And tell me, oh! tell me quickly,
  The worst thou canst do to me!"

"Nay, nay; but thou must be patient,
That I can not tell to thee;
Thou shall sit beside me daily,
And my stores unfolded see."

"Well, enter, good Sir Pilgrim,
Let it be as it must be."
But he lingered on the threshold
And cried. "What guest is he

"Who sits beside thy hearthstone,
All wrinkled, wan and gray?
I can not brook his presence,
So send him hence, I pray."

The old man sighed and shuddered,
And wore such a face of woe,
I could not see him banished,
I would not bid him go.

"Oh, not a friend," I answered,
"Or kin of mine is he;
I welcomed him full kindly
When first he came to me;

"And my trust he hath requited
With many a treacherous blow;
He hath robbed me of great treasure,
Brought me bane and brought me woe.

"But of late he groweth feeble,
Wanes his strength from hour to hour;
I no longer need distrust him,
I no longer fear his power.

"And I pray thee, unknown Pilgrim,
If thy coming unto me
Be to bring some new misfortune
To the son of misery,

"Tarry not with me, Sir Pilgrim;
Rest thee first, then go thy way;
Fare thee forth to other regions,
Let the old man with me stay."

"Not as thou wilt," said the Pilgrim,
"Not as he or I decree;
Years must go or years must linger,
As decreed by Destiny."

Then the old man turned him trembling,
Bowed his bald and hoary head;
Rose, and tottered to the doorway,
Then into the darkness fled.

Straightway then the Pilgrim entered,
At my fireside sitteth he,
With his cloak about him muffled,
Pausing ere he spoke to me.

And I stand before him silent—
Save for sound my heart-beats make—
Dreading much what he may give me,
Dreading more what he may take!

The Coming King

Into the storm went riding
A youth, on a charger bold,
Out into the storm so dreary,
Out into the night so weary,

So dark, so dismal and cold.
Little recked he of the tempest,
For stalwart and brave was he;

With his brazen armor gleaming,
And his princely plumes down-streaming—
A goodly sight to see,

By the fitful light of the torches
Which flared at the open gate
Of a city hidden dimly,
By black walls rising grimly,
In the distant realms of Fate.

He rode through the city's portal;
He left it far behind;
As over the course fast hieing,
As though from a demon flying,
His steed sped like the wind.

On, over many a mountain;
Over the valleys below;
On, through the wild woods crashing;
On, through the mad streams dashing;
On, ever on, they go.

Defying the gale, they galloped;
The earth beneath fled past,
'Till rocks, and chasms, and mountains,
'Till fields, and streams, and fountains
Had vanished all at last;

And they came to a plain, far-reaching,
The shore of a wide, deep sea,
Where mortals go ever a-sailing,
With laughter, and sighing, and wailing,
Out into eternity.

Here drew the youth his bridle,
And slackened his courser's speed;
With frozen fetlocks streaming,
With quivering nostrils streaming,
Panted the foaming steed.

Then ended the storm its fury,
  Its roar sank into a dirge;
But the sound of its restless sighing,
The moan of its mournful dying
  Was drowned in the ocean's surge.

Then parted the clouds in the heavens,
  And drifting their billows among,
The wreck of a moon careering
Came swimming, and plunging, and veering,
  And wildly her weirdly light flung.

And there came another horseman;
  Adown the plain rode he;
Wrinkled, and old, and weary,
Alone in the midnight dreary,
  A piteous sight to see.

His head was bowed to his bosom;
  His hands were clasped on his breast;
Through the wet sand trailed his bridle;
His sword in its sheath hung idle;
  His trusty lance was at rest.

Yet the old man's form was noble,
  With his white locks streaming down,
Though his purple robes were tattered,
And his rusty armor shattered:
  And he wore a jeweled crown.

He saw the youth come riding,
  A fire flashed up in his eye;
His woful plight unheeded,
He never a challenge needed
  The might of his arms to try.

On rushed they both to the conflict;
Mad hoofs flung the sands around—
Each, sword and axe wide-swinging;
With clangor, and clash, and ringing
The terrible blows resound.

They quitted themselves like heroes,
For both were intrepid and brave;
And one had ambition of gaining
A kingdom, and over it reigning;
And one had a kingdom to save.

Fierce raged the battle and fiercer,
Each seeming the victor to each,
Until the stern veteran, gory,
In shame intermingled with glory,
At last rolled dead on the beach.

All grim, and stark, and staring,
On the cold, wet sands he lay,
'Till the tide came rising higher,
And the wild waves rushing nigher,
Bore the ghastly body away.

To his throne the youth went riding
Bearing the crown he had won;
And he added a gem
To the old diadem—
A tear that had turned to a stone:

A tear for the Old Year vanquished,
For the kindly soul just sped;
But he dared not delay,
And he hastened away
To reign in the Old Year's stead.

The Ship of Fate

Along the reaches of that bending beach
Upon whose sands the waves of Life's wide sea,
Now gently lapse, now wildly thundering fall,
A throng of anxious mortals, wandering, waits.
Some, with high hopes and happy hearts elate,
Pressed to the water's brink, nor seemed to feel
The cold night winds around them bleakly blow,
Nor served the thickening folds of misty spray
That hid them from the view, to quench or damp
Their eager, longing ardor. Other some,
Back from the strand with trembling dread withdrew
And fain into the distant wooded wilds,
With gloomy shades and unknown terrors filled,
Had fled, yet dared not brave the stern decree
Of potent destiny, that bid them stay.
Decrepit age, glad youth, and men mature—
The beggar and the prince, wise men and fools,
The mother with her babe and following troop
Of childhood riotous, in surging crowds
Jostled each other on the shore; yet all
Save a few silent ones, who sat apart
And sadly bent their eyes upon the ground,
And listened to the whispered counselings
Of lying, fell Despair,—all, save these few,
Strained eager eyes across the heaving dark
Of the mysterious main, that they might catch
The first faint glimmering of the purple light

Bound to the masthead of that fateful barque
Which yearly, from ever-clouded shores
Of dread, inscrutable Futurity, sets sail,
Freighted with destinies of all mankind.

The midnight bells rang out, and suddenly
Upon the far horizon's verge appeared
A gleaming, star-like ray. On, on, it came;
To tear-dimmed eyes each moment lowering
More and more redly; while to eyes of hope
It beamed, and burned, and brightened steadily,
Until the morning's dawn revealed to view
The fair proportions of a stately ship,
Which grander grew, as in the perfect light
On toward the shore it loomed. Anon her keel
Slid grating through the shifting sands, and sank
Imbedded and infixed.

The multitudes
Around her swarmed. And ever, day by day,
Through the whole year, by hands invisible,
Her wondrous cargo was distributed
Among the motley throng. Scepters and crowns,
Disgrace and honors, pleasures, pains, and cares,
And poverty and riches, precious love,
Firm friendships, broken vows, deep enmities,
Hatreds implacable, and kindliness,
Joys, sorrows, bright new hopes, and deadly fears,
Privations, disappointments, and a host
Of marvelous surprises, were bestowed

Upon the waiting people, with what seemed
A recklessness most indiscriminate.

And passengers from out her cabins came,
Amid the greetings of expectant ones:
Strangers to seek new homes; and friends beloved
Restored after long absence; maidens fair,
In bridal robes arrayed, were fondly claimed
By waiting lovers; bridegrooms went ashore
To find their brides; and little wailing babes
Were carried forth; and now and then a corpse
In sad procession borne.

Thus while the earth
Her circuit ran among the stars, the ship
Lay motionless amidst the lapping waves,
Until her cargo, vast and wonderful,
Was all unladen. And the multitudes
Bring day by day a store of good and ill
Whose uses now were ended: hopes and fears,
And blessedness and woes; things similar
To those brought from the Future, save in this,
That those were fresh and new, whereas all these
Were withered, worn and faded. These they stow
In every vacancy of hold and deck;
And, weeping, lead dear friends aboard, of whom
They take sad leave; then with a lingering gaze
Upon long, mournful lines of coffined forms,

Flower-decked, and closely sealed, they turn
away
And disembark; then in the twilight watch
The laboring ship weigh anchor and set sail
Bearing its strange unprofitable freight
Away, away, to the dim, doleful shores—
The sad, forsaken regions of the Past!

And on the beach again the wandering crowd,
Through the long watches of the weary night,
Awaits the coming of another Year,
Laden with unknown stores. And in each heart
The question lies unsolved: "When the next
Ship
Sails from these sands of Time, shall I be in it,
A choiceless voyager, be carried hence
To that far region whence no traveller
Hath ever yet to mortal shores returned?"

Once More

Once more!
Among the shining stars the Earth has run
Her endless circuit round the glowing sun;
With seasons due of labor and of rest,
Of bloom and fruitage has the world been blest,
Once more.

Once more
The nations upon history's blessed page
Have stamped the annual record of their age,
And on our lives, through good or evil cheer,
Is left the impress of a fleeting year,
Once more.

Once more
To thoughtful souls another New Year brings
Abundant store of anxious questionings;
The Spirit of the Ages reappears,
And points our view to past and future years,
Once more.

Once more
We ask ourselves if we this year have won
The welcome plaudit for each deed "well done,"
And find with sorrow that the path we made
From duty's perfect orbit wide has strayed
Once more.

Once more,
With wondering gaze we turn our saddened eyes
To pierce the darkness that before us lies,
And ask what load of sorrow, pain and care
Our weary souls will be constrained to bear
Once more.

Once more,
With firm and high resolve we start anew;
Though blindly we our devious way pursue,
We can but work and hope, with fervent prayer,
That Heaven will deign to make our lives its care
Once more.

Once more
It may be ours to greet another year;
But should the present close our brief career,
May fadeless joys our future fate betide,
And for each new guest Heaven's Gate swing wide,
Once more.

Address to the Oratorio Society

of Baltimore

"When music, heavenly maid! was young,"—
  According to the poet's story,—
She dwelt in depths of solitude,
Within a cave of mountains rude,
  Remote from haunts of fame and glory.

Yet often to her lonely cell,
  Drawn by her melodies entrancing,
The Passions thronged, that each might feel
Her influence o'er him steal,—
  His own peculiar mood enhancing.

Thus Joy exulted, Hope beamed bright,
  And Love increased in her devotion;
Fear, Pity, Grief, wailed loud and long,
While Sorrow sang a plaintive song,
  And Anger quivered with emotion.

They sang and moaned, they railed and raged,
  In accents wild, or cadence cheerful;
Hate and Despair complaining sore,
While Rage and Vengeance raved and swore,
  Until the dismal din grew fearful.

But Music now is Matron grown,
  With tuneful children by the legion.
Her dreary mountain-cave of yore,
She has exchanged for Baltimore,
  And brought her brood to this blest region.

A spacious hall is now her own;
'Tis true she well deserves one greater;
But in proud Baltimore, you know,
Our dignity makes progress "slow:"—
She shall have better quarters "later."

In olden days she was content
Through shells and reeds to pour her numbers.
Now throats of brass, and tuneful strings
Blend lofty notes with those she sings,
Voicing the soul that in her slumbers.

Her "flowing tresses" now are bound;
Her robes are cut with fashion's graces;
Her "buskins gemmed with early dews,"
Transformed to rubber overshoes,
Because our streets are mucksome places.

Of course, one naturally asks,
What has produced these great mutations?
Whose efforts put this "progress" through?
To whom, her gratitude, and ours, are due,
For these delightful transformations?

First, Mr. President, to thee,
Our grateful thanks we gladly tender.
For tireless energies displayed;
For courage ever undismayed;
Accept the tribute that we render.

For, what would be a ship's career,
With none to steer it, on the ocean?
What were a body without head,
But body only, stark and dead,
Without a pulse of life or motion?

Thus mute our songless city lay;
  Thus drifted it across the ages;
Until this benefactor came,
Who proudly wrote its honored name,
  On history's emblazoned pages.

He gathered Music's scattered bones,
  And put a tuneful head upon them.
And, hence, forever dear to fame,
Be Mr. Otto Sutro's name:
  Bring laurels to him; he has won them.

And close beside, on Honor's scroll,
  Another name must be imprinted;
Another tribute still is due;
For brave Professor Fincke, too,
  Deserves the meed of thanks unstinted.

Who else had ventured to subdue
  Such throngs as raved round Music's dwelling?
Who with such vim could chiding storm,
And for delinquents "make it warm,"
  While yet their fealty compelling?

Who so symetrical a whole,
  Of "members" so diverse, could fashion?
Could guide each voice, and shade each tone,
Blending all feeling, till, alone,
  Majestic stands the Soul of Passion?

So, may the Muses crown his brow,
  Whose leadership is so potential:
Who with such judgment, taste, and skill,—
And such indomitable will,—
  Wields a baton so influential.

Last, but by no means least, we bring
  Our thankful tribute to the Chorus,
For those bright floods of song that roll
Refreshingly across the soul,
  And sweep in soothing surges o'er us.

Such feasts of sweet, celestial sound,
  Are foretastes of the bliss supernal.
Entranced with these, no joy we lack;
Nor would we wish our Eden back,
  Could we but make these strains eternal.

'Tis true, good Choristers, that you,
  To reach the height of your proud station,
Must bid defiance to catarrh,
And sundry other ills, that are
  Peculiar to your grand vocation.

Since singing symphonies entails
  The braving of all stress of weather.
Folks may pray solo prayers at home,
But to have concerts they must come
  And make their melody together.

You practice early, practice late,
  The masterpieces of the nations:
Great Handel's harmonies divine;
Bach, Mendelssohn, and Rubinstein;
  And Hayden's glorious creations.

But surely you should not repine;
  Or censure fate, as unpropitious.
Virtue its own reward bestows
By giving faultless ears to those
  Who manufacture sounds delicious.

And think how fortunate you are,
To perfect, here, your education,
If, for the heavenly choirs, it prove
That civil service rules, above,
Exact a strict examination.

Think, too, what benedictions crown
Your efforts to enhance our pleasures:
What hearts, that silent were before,
Shall sing exultant, evermore,
The echoes of your charming measures.

Think of bright memories, secured,
As one result of your endeavor,
To those who sink beneath the tomb,
To regions of eternal gloom,
To know no more of heaven, forever.

So, pray, sing on; discordant notes,
And inharmonious dissensions,
Reserving for those jangled lyres,
Whereon you practice in church choirs:
The ancient scene of such contentions.

Sing on; but sing the same songs o'er,
Under the same astute direction.
Each former effort has the last,
Its brilliant prototype, surpassed:
Maintain your standard of perfection.

Nor seek that limit to exceed.
For Shakespeare says the man is silly,
Who, with a blind presumption, bold,
Attempts to gild refined gold,
Or paint the whiteness of the lily.

Sing on! Sing on! In future days.
  Bards shall rehearse your deathless story;
And tell to all applauding time,
How, with your melodies sublime,
  You covered Baltimore with glory!

Baltimore, May, 1888.

The Bachelor Girl

Well! A Bachelor Girl why shouldn't I be?—
With my heart my own, and my fancy free
To order my life as it pleases Me,
And none to dispute my Liberty!
  Is there any reason
  That you can see?

A slave to some man would you have me be;
Or else with his Lordship to disagree,
Till it came to a dreadful divorce decree?—
Which would not be pleasant for him or me,
  So the Bachelor Girl
  Is wise, you see.

But if ever a time were to come—Ah me!—
When youth with its brightness should threaten to flee,
And Some One—just charming—could prove that he
Would make her as happy, as happy could be,
  Would the Bachelor Girl
  Hold out? We'll see!

New York, April, 1894.

All Hail!

"Mary, maiden, hail to thee!
Highly favored thou shalt be!"
Spake the Angel from on high
To the maid of Galilee,
When the day of grace drew nigh
Which the ages longed to see.
"Hail! of women chosen one!
Thou shalt bear God's Holy Son,
Who for men new life shall win
And His people save from sin.
He shall reign on David's throne
Which shall ever be His own.
Such is God's mysterious plan
For restoring fallen man.
Blessed thou shalt ever be,
Mary, maid of Galilee!"
Mary answered: "Let it be
As thou sayest unto me.
If such favor I have won
Let the will of God be done."

Mary, mother, hail to thee!
Ever blessed thou shalt be!
Though upon that starry morn
In thy meek humility
Christ was in a stable born,
Shrouded in obscurity;
Angels the glad tidings bring,
And celestial anthems sing;
Beaming splendors of a star

Make Him manifest afar;
Shepherds from their fleecy fold,
Magi bringing gifts of gold,
Babe and Mother wondering see,
For His light encircles thee.
And the saints of every clime
Since that most auspicious time
With harmonious accord
Bless the mother of their Lord,
That in thee God's will was done,
Blessed Mother of His Son!

Soul of Mortal, hail to thee!
Highly favored thou canst be!
For the message from on high
To the maid of Galilee,
Telling of salvation nigh,
Is repeated unto thee.
In the heart of God above
Dwells the all creative Love,
Waiting to o'ershadow thee
With His own divinity.
Mortal, though the gracious call
Is extended unto all,
Thou mayst be a chosen one
To receive His Holy Son,
Evermore to reign within,
And redeem thee from thy sin.
Heart of Motal, shall it be
That the Christ is formed in thee?
When thou hast such favor won
Dost thou say, "God's will be done?"

Soul of Christian, hail to thee!
Ever blessed thou shalt be
If the image of thy Lord,
That divine humanity
Now in heaven and earth adored,
Shall be perfected in thee.
Life may bring thee toil and pain;
Care may bind thee with its chain;
Thine may be a bitter cup
Till its dregs are drunken up;
But when life's dark night is past,
And its morning comes at last,
Angels shall thy triumph sing
Till the heavenly arches ring,
And the pæans that arise
Scale the walls of Paradise
Countless ages as they roll
Shall bring honor to the Soul
Who the will of God has done
Through the power of His Son.

Sinful Mortal, hail to thee!
Christ can thy redemption be.
That He might thy ransom pay,
And from bondage set thee free,
He was born on Christmas Day
Of the maid of Galilee.
Vilest sinner, love divine
Seeketh in thy heart a shrine;
Streams of heavenly mercy flow
Into broken hearts below.
Though thy sins as scarlet be

White as snow He cleanseth thee
Who has ever pardon sent
To the heart of penitent.
And a blessing waits for thee
On His own Nativity.
    Highly favored sinner, say
That His love thou wilt obey.
Let the angels round His throne
Sing with joy, "God's will is done!"

The Prayer Book

    This is not a bait
    To lure fickle fate;
Nor is it even a bare hook.
    'Tis an India cup,
    From which you may sup
The memory of my prayer book.

    For I feared that when
    You had gone again,
Unless I some sort of care took,
    Amid life's fret
    You might forget
To send me my Hebrew prayer book.

    So whenever you sip
    From its curving lip,
Or even upon it you dare look,
    Think of somebody's fate,—
    Vide, Acts, five and eight,—
Unless you have sent me that prayer book.

Farewell

Old Year, depart in peace!
Thy flying, creeping, strangely lighted days
Have waned to the last feeble, flickering rays
That bring thy life's release.

Old Year, thy work is done.
With vernal miracles of loveliness,
And autumn's stores the tribes of Earth to bless,
Well has thy course been run.

Old Year, we render thee
Thanks for thy many brave and kindly deeds;
For ceaseless ministries to countless needs
We thank thee gratefully.

Old Year, I love thee not!
Thou broughtest blessings with one potent hand;
The other of our treasures didst demand:
The gain was thine, God wot.

Old Year, thou hast removed,
Despite our clinging, helpless hold, far more
Than coming years are equal to restore:—
Thou tookest our beloved.

Old Year, thou hast betrayed
The sacred trust our hearts reposed in thee:
Thy frozen, withered leaves drift heedlessly
O'er graves where hope is laid.

Old Year, I blame thee not!
Thy functions were ordained by higher powers
To bow to God's decrees is thine as ours,
Or sad, or blest, the lot.

Old Year, thou canst not take
From our full hearts the love that they have known;
The stature whereunto our souls have grown;
The thoughts that in us wake.

Old Year, go on thy way!
Sink to the depths of that deep, tranquil sea
Where ages of the past eternity
Dissolve in dark decay.

Old Year, one boon I crave:
The memory of wrongs that we have done,
The tale of triumphs o'er our weak souls won,
Take with thee to thy grave.

Old Year, now fare thee well!
Thy young and puissant successor waits
Impatient, at Time's leaden-hinged gates.
His deeds who may foretell!

Old Year, again farewell!
Would we could bury in the tomb with thee
The sins and sorrows of humanity!
Old Year, farewell! farewell!

Numbers

Howso versed in mathematics
Scientists may yet become,
Of the good contained in numbers
They will never find the sum.
It is even very doubtful
That the task can be begun
Since no certain constant value
Yet exists for Number One.

The Temples of the Lord

(Respectfully inscribed to the Rev. Father Matthew O'Keefe, in honor of his untiring labors upon a new church.)

Great Solomon, the mighty King,
With wisdom vast inspired,
Whose willing heart, by flame of zeal,
Most piously was fired,
Builded a temple unto God,
With gorgeous grace endowed,
Where the Great Presence deigned to dwell,
In glory and in cloud;
Where all His worshippers might meet,
For blessings from the Mercy-seat.

But sacrifices there no more
On fiery altars bleed;
No more the stately solemn rites
In those grand courts proceed.
And that fair fane, the pride of Earth,
On earth no longer stands,
It's glorious beauty overthrown
By hostile, heathen hands.
For Israel, profundly blind,
Refused the Saviour of mankind.

So, to the lands all lying then
In depths of midnight gloom,
There came the light resplendent shed
From Christ's forsaken tomb.
And multitudes of sin-marred souls
Renounced their evil ways,

With thankfulness of greatful hearts
That turned their scoffs to praise.
And countless temples rise today,
Where David's Greater Son holds sway.

And now great honor and acclaim,
To one wise Priest we bring,
Who half a century of life
To God makes offering,—
At the high altars of the Lord,
Serving with tireless zeal;
Shunning no ministry to ills
Within His power to heal;
Bestowing benedictions when
He ministers to fellow men.

He braved a pestilential death
Religion's balms to bear,
To sailors from a foreign shore,
Whose needs he made His care.
For Duty, to his fearless soul,
No terrors had to bring;
And graciously his valiant deed
Was honored by their King.
Though oft his deeds of pitying love
No record gain but that above.

Yet not this ministry benign
His ardent heart contents;
With faith, and hope, and charity
He rears rich monuments.—
Fit temples to the loving Lord,
Where everyone may rise,
With beautous reverential rites,
Each heart's pure sacrifice;

And future generations there
Blend glorious chant with humble prayer.

So, when beside these sacred walls
His body, resting, lies,
And angels his unfettered soul
Lead through the opening skies,
There, in God's many-mansioned House,
May some bright altar be.
Where joyfully he still may serve,
In blessed ministry;
And in his turn, through endless days,
Bring tribute to the ceaseless praise.

And when before God's awful throne,
At the Great Judgment Day,
The record of his work is shown,
Our Blessed Lord may say,
That of unchiseled human souls,
Committed to his care,
He fashioned polished stones to place
In God's own Temple fair;
And grant of him this verdict true:
"He builded better than he knew."

December 30, 1901.

Shema Yisrael Adonay Elohainu Adonay Echod

"Shema Yisrael," is the lesson we learn
In the earliest days of our youth.
"Adonay Elohainu," the Lord is our God:

How precious and blessed this truth!
"It never can fail:
Shema Yisrael!"
"Adonay Elohainu," this is our God
And ours forever shall be.
Through life he will bless us, in death be our guide,
Till "Shalom"—"Peace eternal"—we see.
Through Him we prevail:
"Shema Yisrael!"

"Shema Yisrael;" 'tis our mission alone,
"Adonay Echod" to proclaim;
The Lord everlasting shall reign o'er the earth,
And "One" be forever His name.
The future we hail:
"Shema Yisrael!"

A Tribute from His Pupil and Friend

(To the memory of Rev. Dr. A. S. Bettelheim, who died and was buried at sea, August 21, 1890.)

"*Behold on Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.*"

'Tis midnight on the solemn sea:
Slow sails the stately ship along:
Pale moonlight silvers o'er the scene,
And wanly lights a trembling throng
Of strangers, gathered round the bier
Of One whom distant hearts hold dear;
Who wait his coming to their shore;
But shall behold his face no more!

Encircled by the saddened band,
  A lifeless Form, the Rabbi lay;
Untended by those loving hands
  Waiting to serve him, far away;
Yet swathed in cerements of such grave
As lies beneath the surging wave:
Its pall the banner of the free,
The stars and stripes of Liberty.

O, heart that beat for all mankind,
  Is thy warm tide forever chilled?
O, hand that labored for thy race,
  Why are thy potent pulses stilled?
Great mind to plan the good he wrought;
Teacher who practiced what he taught;
Brave champion of God's high laws,
Could he forsake Truth's holy cause?

He answers not: those lips are dumb,
  That ear, though never dull before,
Heeds no appeal. His eyes are closed
  On earthly sights forever more.
At last that teeming brain is still;
Nor hands nor foot obeys his will
Who, ever at the call of grief,
Hastened with comfort and relief.

Then, through the stillness of the night,
  Rises the voice of fervent prayer,
In plaintive, cadenced Hebrew strains
  That thrill upon the shuddering air.
Each head is bowed; all knees are bent,
Under the starry firmament,
As, reverently, there, is said
The solemn service for the dead.

"O Lord and Father, righteous Judge,
Blest be thy Name, and blest be Thou!
Sole King of all the Universe,
Before thy throne we meekly bow.
Thou givest life to sons of men.
'Tis thou that takest it again.
Thy mighty arm is strong to save:
Thy mercies reach beyond the grave.

"God of our Fathers, bend thine ear,
And hear our supplicating cries,
For this true son of Israel,
Who under Death's dominion lies.
With faith like Abraham's of old,
As Moses meek, as Daniel bold,
He sang to David's tuneful lyre,
And preached with great Isaiah's fire.

"Lord of the Spirits of all Flesh,
To thy sure mercies we commend
The soul that has departed hence,
Thy faithful servant, and our friend.
Thy Law was ever in his heart;
He lived its treasures to impart.
Grant him forever blest to be
In thy supreme felicity.

"And oh! for those who hold him dear,
Shield and Protector, hear us pray,
Those stricken but unconscious ones
Who wait the sorrows of this day.
Thy balm of Gilead bestow,
And heal the desolating woe
Of hearts that fondly round him twine,
And his dear memory enshrine."

Scarce died the mournful tones away
When one low whispered word was said.
Then, launched alone upon the sea,
Sank to its nameless, lowly bed
The body of so grand a man,
That, though his years filled not life's span,
In him, the world through which he trod,
Beheld the noblest work of God.

The heaving bosom of the deep
Received him to its close embrace.
And in old Ocean's tireless arms
This scion of a noble race
Will sleep until it shall be said:
"Remorseless Sea, give up thy Dead!"
So large a heart could scarce find room
In any narrower, shallower tomb.

There, with his canopy the skies,
The burning stars his tapers bright,
The winds and waves in symphonies
His ceaseless "Kadesh" shall recite.
But aching hearts must still weep on,
Mourning the joy forever gone,
And vainly moan the burden o'er:
"Alas! he can return no more!"

But has his spirit perished? "No!"
A thousand thundering waves reply.
The garb of flesh that robed his soul
Beneath the ocean's waste may lie;
But borne by angel hands away
From its frail tenement of clay,
His spirit mounts to realms above,
Where reign eternal peace and love.

Father divine, to fashion men,
  Shalt thou omnipotence employ,
And Death be ever able, then,
  Thy loving children to destroy?
Perish the thought that souls made pure
Shall not eternally endure;
That spirits grown devoutly wise
Live not forever in the skies.

And shall our narrow, biased bounds,
  Or limits of mere human creeds,
Or the warped zealot's prejudice,
  Annul a life of noble deeds?
Speak, Christian Priests, who by his bed,
Fraternal "Pater Nosters" said,
Would you deny this saintly soul
The guerdon of a heavenly goal?

Not your own Holy Writ declares,
  That, as in Adam all have died,
So all mankind shall live again,
  Through that slain Jew, the Crucified.
And who dare ban God's chosen race
Beyond the reach of boundless grace?
Or bar from his eternal rest
The people God himself hath blest?

So, Lord and Father, while we mourn,
  Thy holy Name we still can bless
For thy departed servant's life
  Of piety and righteousness:
And pray thee take his spirit rare
Under thine own almighty care,
While waits in peace his sacred dust
The resurrection of the just.

Baltimore, September, 1890.

Pharaphrase of a Portion of the 42d Psalm

(Gratefully inscribed to Rev. Dr. A. S. Bettelheim, by his pupil and friend.)

As the meek doe, climbing the mountain steeps,
When burning suns have scorched the sultry air,
Longs for the cool and shady covert, where
Beneath thick-arching branches calmly sleeps
The clear, bright pool of waters, fresh and sweet;
Which, scenting from afar, in eager haste
She mounts from crag to crag, with nimble feet,
Their life-restoring draughts again to taste.

Thus, O my God! climbing life's mountain peaks,
And wandering, weary, o'er earth's arid wastes,
I long for Thee! Thus ever gladly hastes
My thirsty soul, to find the life she seeks,
In Thee, the living God. Thus joyously,
Though weak and faint, she seeks Thy gracious face
Before Thy presence to appear, and be
Allowed to taste the sweetness of Thy grace.

January 4, 1889.

To Prof. John H. Hewitt

In view of any kindly offering which might have been made to him by his friend, T. J. W.

A chaplet fair, of verdant bays,
Is due the Poet, who hath sung
Melodious songs, through length of days,
And, though life's evening-shadows close
Around him, wooing to repose,
Keeps his resounding harp still strung.

The snowy locks of hoary age
His honored temples long have graced:
His brow, for thought and counsel sage
The fitting dome, which these adorn,
This silver crown has proudly worn,
By Nature's hand upon it placed.

Thus doubly crowned, he prostrate lies,
By weight of weary years oppressed,
Nor mourns the blessings Fate denies.
But when relentless Time demands
His treasures, with his feeble hands
He clasps his lyre; and yields the rest.

Then, as a lark ensnared by guile,
And held by bars, imprisoned fast,
Though captive, still sings on the while;
So he, his melodies can pour,
And on the wings of music soar;
Still tuneful, like the swan, at last.

Master once more of music's might,
Before him generations rise;
The young and happy, gay and bright,

Who through his skill achieved the art
Which brings pure solace to the heart,
When skies grow dark, and pleasure flies.

So, throned upon his couch in state,
Around him come, by Memory called,
Glad throngs of loving souls, who wait
To join the chorus of their lays
In one sweet symphony of praise
To him whose notes their hearts enthralled.

With these dear friends of days gone by,
Who gladdened all his life of yore:
Who now invisibly draw nigh,
The master's drooping heart to cheer,
And calm his trembling spirit's fear,
With hopes of peace forevermore:—

With these, let friends who still remain,
In unison their voices blend,
And supplicate in earnest strain,
That in the courts of heaven above,
Redeemed by everlasting love,
His blissful songs may never end.

St. John Baptist

The mission the Baptist came to fill
Was to turn the hearts of men to the will
Of the Lord, and in them a way prepare,
For His love and truth to enter there.
And since the unknown we can not learn
Except by what we already discern;
Nor love the unseen divinity

If we love no being whom we can see.—
If the bliss of Heaven we ever would know,
We must learn to love on the earth below.
And very truly Baptists are they
Who in our hearts prepare a way
For the unknown joys of the world above
By filling them now with an earnest love
For the good, and the true, and the pure, that so
The love of God in our souls may grow.

1864.

Ode to Ella

Ella!
I love thee! While the light
Of youth rests on thy brow;
While peace, joy, hope unite
To bless thee. Fondly now
With a deep love
I love thee.

I love thee! And though care,
Dark sorrow, pale grief, all
The shades Earth's pilgrims share,
Around thy bow'd heart fall,
With fervent love
I'll love thee.

I love thee! Heavenly day,
Will soon on life's dark night
Dawn with unclouded ray;
And ever in its light
With holy love
I'll love thee.

Dream Days

Idyls of a Worker

Castle Dorn

A vision of two stately oaks,
Which once beside a common highway stood,
Guarding the entrance to a wooded lane.
Thick-boled and lofty, branching wide and full,
In massive strength and symmetry they rose.
And one shone in the sunlight, golden-green,
Swaying the fringes of its tassel-blooms;
While budding palely on each twig of both,
Was promise of the summer yet to come.

The lane led into an enchanted wood,
Plunging and climbing, winding in and out
Among moss-covered stumps, and underneath
The dark lines of reticulated boughs,
Until it ended at the gates of Dorn.
Here, amid towering oaks and basswood huge,
Maples, and cottonwoods of magic growth,
Thickets of thorn, and graceful curving elm,
With curious cabalistic carving scored,
Clumps of straight poplars, slender and white-
stemmed,
And trees of fruitage wild, beyond all count,
Appeared the vision strange of Castle Dorn,
Dark-frowning, blank, and windowless.

But all day long the birds around it sang:
Chiefly the mourning dove, who for a nest,

Laid loosely a few careless sticks, then sat
And moaned, and moaned, and made her hapless plaint;
And throngs of clamorous blackbirds, whose bright wings,
In tireless motion, each prismatic hue
Reflected, and incessant music made
Like distant waters rushing over rocks;
And cheery robins; and small piping wrens;
Bluebirds; and perky bluejays; and sleek crows,
That circling sailed, in ravenous quest, or swung
Idly athwart the heavens, and croaked and cawed:
Myriads of squirrels, unmolested, frisked,
Glancing and chattering, in the ancient oaks;
And timid hares about the doorways played;
And in the warm, still sunshine, little swarms
Of insects whirled like clouds of sentient dusk.
Pale anemones; and violets blue
And purple; and the sorrel's dainty cup;
The lavish dandelion's discs of gold;
The tent-leafed mandrake, with its waxen blooms;
And many nameless flowers, as pure and fair
As though they sprang from seeds by angels sown,
Pranked gaily all the freshly verdant sod;
And drank the living light upon them poured,
Through tracery of emerald-set boughs.
And the soft air was perfumed with the breath
Of all the blossoming wild-fruit trees. The thorn,
Ungracious hid its clustering milk-white buds,

Beneath the greenness of its dark-bright leaves;
The crab blushed deeply for the bitter tide
Rising to fill its aromatic fruit;
The cherry lifted fragrant, snowy spikes,
Which by no sign its treacherous gifts betrayed;
And to the tender grapes the plum discoursed,
In whisper sweet, prophetic of its nectar,
While every lightest breeze that stirred the boughs,
Sent showers of petals, mingled pink and white,
Among the green flakes drifting from the elms.
Thus was the wondrous yearly miracle
Of buried Life resurgent, now renewed;
And new creations of fresh loveliness,
And melody, and fragrance, doubting Earth
Once more assured that God was yet alive,
And mindful still of mundane happiness.
Such, with a bright blue sky above it bent,
Was Castle Dorn, encompassed by the May.
And here the worker dwelt; dwelt with a few
Of nearest kin, to whom he ministered
With grateful care, by welcome duty bound.
And here he worked; worked unremittingly;
Worked with the slow, sure methods of the Fates:
Tilling the soil; and caring for dumb brutes;
Grubbing the barrens, and transforming them
To fruitful fields; felling the stubborn trees,
And shaping timbers to his various uses:
And here he built; not house and barn alone,
Nor stables, cribs, and pens; but built himself
A character; and built himself a Life.

Burning the Slough

A dream at eventide.
The twilight deepened, and there was no moon,
"Come," said the Worker, "let us burn the Slough.
The new grass grows apace, and we shall lack
Wild hay unless we burn the Slough."
Arming his men
With clubs and pail, and clouts to fight the fire,
They sallied forth, and southward bent their steps
To a near wood, that in the darkness loomed
Still darker. Balmy airs around them breathed
The sweet, fresh breath of the new life diffused
Through every growing thing. And a low chant,—
Sad with melodious discords,—from hoarse frogs,
Who in the sedges now rejoicing crooned,
Was Night's first vocal welcome to the Spring.
Threading the mazes of the silent wood,—
As men who were on some dark deed intent,
Rather than one of light,—they groped their way,
Until, emerging through the hazel copse,
They reached the marshy meadow lying dark
Beneath the calm eyes of the changeless stars.
On, wading through the dews, the Worker led
The way to where the grasses rankest grew,
Upon the borders of a sluggish stream,
Which filled the ditch dug out to drain the Slough.

Gathering the long, dried grass, that all around,
Thick-matted lay, they twisted it in wisps.
And deftly, then, the Worker struck a match
Upon his knee. But a light breath of air
Extinguished it. Another and another
Yet he tried; but they likewise expired,
Ere the damp grass ignited. Taking then
His hat, beneath its shelter broad, with care
He gained a flame, and set the grass ablaze.
On all sides now the fire quickly spread,
And the men came, and dipped their wisps in it,
And, walking, trailed them up and down the Slough,
Revealing all their course by lines of fire.
To the clear eyes of Angels thus, perhaps,
The pathway of the good through life is marked
By lines of following light.
The living flames
Now ran about the Slough in reckless chase;
Here, flying in hot haste; there, coming on
In hotter still pursuit. With crackle, snap,
And muffled roar, the wild things rush and roll,
And rise, to revel and to fall again.
The while dense clouds of perfumed smoke arose,
And with a pleasant, pungent odor filled
The air; and dimmed the brightness of the stars.
At first a light breeze from the southwest blew;
And as the fire burned its force increased;
And then the rising winds fresh impulse gave

To the competing flames. The wilful fire,
Aroused to opposition, slowly strove
To climb the southern slope, against the wind;
And strove successfully, until the men,
Laying about with vigor, thrashed and stamped,
And crushed, and smothered it, to save from loss
The growth of wheat and timothy beyond.
"How like the Spirit of ambitious Man,"—
The Worker mused, meantime,—"is that which seems
To animate these elements which we
Sagely pronounce unconscious. Even as we
They seem to stimulate and emulate
Each other. And they lack not courage, faith,
Nor zeal, to struggle against odds,—and win.
It is no pleasing task to thwart their will."
But now the flames that sped before the wind,
His care demand. With flaunting banners wide
Unfurled head-long they rush; flapping red wings,
Whose rapid sweep resistlessly destructive,
Approached the eastern limits of the Slough.
The men their efforts now alone direct
The fencing to preserve. Copiously,
Along the length of line exposed they dash
And pour the sludge and water from the ditch,
Until the fierce heat backward drives them all.
Then the hot, lapping tongues of ravenous flame,
Upon the seasoned timbers freely feed;
And every post, and every rail, involved,
Burns redly, till they fall in blackened heaps.

In the next field, lying to the northeast,
Where last year's grain had grown, and had been thrashed,
Was a long straw-stack, crescent shaped, and high;
Should the winds bear a burning brand to it,
The adjacent woods, and Castle Dorn might fall.
But happily, the grasses on the north
Had grown so sparsely, that small care sufficed,
To check the northward progress of the fire,
And leave the scathed sward smouldering beneath
Thin clouds of grey, the dying embers breath.
The west end of the Slough was not yet burned,
And thither, to complete their work, the men
Proceeded. Soon they had it all alight,
And burning safely. Then upon a pail
Upturned, the weary Worker sat him down,
And bared his broad brow to the cooling breeze.
The full glare of the blaze, which on him fell,
To threads of lustrous amber turned his locks,
While fitful gleams with timid shadows played
Among the meshes of his tawny beard.
Resting, he sat awhile; and watched the flames
Climb spirally about the green, new grass,
And at its top, in crimson blossoms glow,
Or hang a moment, like some wondrous fruit:
Watched the blue lights, shoot up the tall, dry grass,
Then leap into the air, and disappear
In curling, floating ghostly wreaths of smoke.
And saw, in the black distance, sudden flames

Among the wind-fanned embers rise and die;
And saw the men at work among the fires,
Moving about in gloom and glare, restless,
Like spirits lost; and as some plied their prods,
And showers of sparks around them flew, they seemed
Like demons torturing their hapless prey,
Or Fates at work upon Plutonian forges.
And One,—a Being from some sphere remote,
Perchance the Moon, who having lived on Earth
For ages, was accounted human now;—
Stood, leaning on a staff and viewed the scene.
Then said. "In dark barbaric ages, Man,
Light-seeking, on his altars offered fires,
Unto a God who answered him by fire,
Emblem and evidence of Deity:
And sacred fires lent their radiance
To dim-eyed searchers for the hidden bond,
Which links the human life to that divine.
Man the sole creature is upon this earth,
To whom the use of fire has been revealed,
And power to dominate this Power of Air
Been given. Only he kindles the brand,
Waking to life a spirit in dead matter;
That with the aid of this superior force
He may a thousand dull, base things transmute
To his own higher uses. In Man's hand
The lighted torch becomes a scepter: he
Who sways it best grows greatest. From the first
Rude, charred canoe of the primeval savage,
To the "Great Eastern's" complicated bulk;
From the essaying forge of Tubal Cain,

To the amazing marvels wrought by means
Of modern mechanisms, all the arts
Of useful human industry, depend
In some way upon fire."
"Truly, yes;"
The Worker interposed, bowing assent,
"Gunpowder, steam, and the electric spark
Attest the needful offices of fire
In civilizing Man."
"And even in
The world's beyond," added the Being, "life,
in all its forms of good or evil power,
Is manifest by fire. There goodness shines
With light celestial; while dark vices glow,
Unwilling, blazoned in infernal fires."
"Small wonder is it, then," the Worker said,
If untaught minds have sometimes bowed before
The shrine of this essential source of light,
And heat, and force, and worshipped such a Power.
Oft, it seems in deed a thing of conscious life,
With will, and purpose, as with powers endued;
The power, and will, and purpose of a Fiend.
In earlier years, when these broad lands were wild,
Miles of unbroken prairie blazed at once,
And we ploughed fire-guards in vain. Like seas
Of molten brass, the fierce flame rolled and surged,
And raged, and roared; and from the seething mass,
Rose in tall spires; or on the howling winds
Hissing and shrieking went; leaping the guards;

Mounting the trees that in its pathway stood;
Seeming to seek, exulting when it found,
The widow's corn-cribs, or the poor man's stacks.
By day and night we fought it; often fought
It all night long; at one point beating it,
With great exertions back, only to see
Another by its cruel prowess gained.
With garments burned, and brows and lashes singed,
With blistered hands; and nerves and muscles strained,
Our utmost efforts scarce availed to save
Some remnant from the fell destroyer's grasp.
And the calm distant heavens, pitiless,
Serenely shining through the smoke and gloom,
Over the blackened desolation smiled."
He, pondering a moment, paused; and then
Half-musingly resumed: "The devotees
Of unknown gods, could scarcely but believe
That Powers of Evil ruled on earth; for when
Have Elemental Forces ever shown
One gleam of ruth or sympathy for man?"
The Being heard, and turned to make reply;
But now the Worker's ever watchful eye
Saw creeping like a serpent stealthily,
Through the tall grass, a slender thread of fire;
And with deliberate haste, he strode away,
To check its wilful course, while yet he might.
The Slough had burned for hours and was bare;
The wind had fallen; and a murky cloud

Had overspread the sky, before, well-spent,
The Worker and his men turned their steps
homeward,
Through darkness, deeper for the recent glare,
And thickened by the heavy fragrant smoke.
When they had crossed the Slough, and reached
the copse,
Before they plunged again into the wood,
The Worker cast a careful glance behind.
None else could aught discern but a faint gleam
In the dim distance, flickering on the ground:
But his experienced eye saw more. He said.
"The stack is lost! The fire, burrowing
Among the roots close-matted in the earth,
Has nearly gained the stack; and it must burn."
Nor had he judged amiss; the treacherous fire,
Before they reached it, found a few stray straws
And gliding, lightning-like, along their track,
Vaulted upon the pile, and o'er it played
Along the crescent's curve, in countless jets,
Like a mad band of gleeful Imps escaped
From Pandemonium, holding orgies wild.
Red, purple, orange, blue, and pale white lights
Together reveled; climbing now; and now,
Commingled, rolling down in sheets of flame.
Meanwhile, the black skies lowered, and the
clouds,
Shook from their heavy, drooping wings, large
drops,
Premonitory of the coming shower.
"For once," the Worker said, "the elements,
So oft inimical, propitious seem.
This rain all danger will avert, before

The sleeping winds awake." Then scattering
The surface straw, to give the rain ingress,
They watched the smoking pile, as here and there
A bright flame from its burning depths shot forth.
"Vainly the human soul strives to conceal,
To smother, or to quench, the fearful fires
Which glow within it, to refine the heart
Of gold, or that of dross consume."
It was
The Being spoke; but not for audience,
Nor for reply; in scarcely conscious thought.
Hereon the Worker said: "Is not this strange?
Great Homer and the other mighty kings
And princes in the realms of poetry
And thought, compare great things with small; depict
Their gods and men, in feeling, form, and action
By the aid, illustrative, of beasts,
And things inanimate. Whereas, to us,
Degenerate, all lowly things point upward.
Through Nature's humblest forms, through all her range
Of unobtrusive action, we may learn
Her lofty truths:—by nearness of extremes."
The copious rain percluded converse now;
And as it rendered needless further care,
They left the blasted plain, which being cleared
Of hindering growths, was now prepared, anew
To flourish, and a richer crop to yield:

As, sometimes, in what seems a blighted life,
With ripened joys and springing hopes laid waste,
The ashes of the withered Past but serve
The Future to enrich and fertilize.

Thorns

It seemed a waning day in early Spring:
No folded leaf appeared on shrub or tree.
The hazel blossoms, venturous in the copse,
Hung brown, scorched by indignant frosts; and scarce
The rashest blades of grass had hardihood
To peer forth at the remnants of late snows,
That in the fence-corners unmelted lay.
Along the low and leaden sky there swept
A bleakly sullen wind, that trailed the clouds,
Unwilling, in its wake, and whirled the leaves
From their death beds, along the frosted ground.
Yet two together wandered down the lane;
And passed beyond the mighty oaks which stood
Before its entrance, like grim sentinels;
And by the upturned cornfield; and along
The field of sprouting rye; over broad hills,
Thick-wooded; and across the bottom bogs;
Until at length they reached a small, clear creek,
And by its windings loiteringly strayed.
Nor walked they on in silence, or in gloom;

Along their way the dauntless meadow lark
Poured out the sweetness of his liquid strain,
As with resistless eloquence he called
The tardy Spring to hasten from the South;
While here and there, in field of barren bare ,
A prairie hen droned to the cheerless day,
Or, weary, whirred away in sudden flight,
To seek, 'mid untried stalks, the doubtful grains:
And any ringed stump, or log decayed,
Or curious feather dropped from wild bird's wing,
Or stone, or bleaching skull of horse or ox,
Would furnish food for thought, and themes afford
For converse, and the interchange of thought.
Now on a tiny islet in the stream,
Sandy and bare, a single egg they see,
Without a nest, exposed upon the ground;
And One sprang lightly down the bank abrupt,
And waded out, the trophy to secure.
Then on a fallen tree they crossed the creek,
Where on its further bank a locust grew,
Whose limbs were set with interlacing thorns,
Long, sharp, and strong; and—wonderful to see,—
With fruits of orient ripe upon their points.
Plucking the thorns with careful hands, to add
Such treasures to the Being's store, again
They wandered on; till, tired at length, they sought
A resting place, by thoughful Nature formed
Among the gnarled roots of a giant oak
Convolved about the soil of the steep bluff

That jutted, as a wall into the stream.
Reposing here, they listened to the flow
Of the clear creek's subsiding waters; or
The dismal callings heard of fearless crows,
Who in the branches bare above them sat,
And of each other hopelessly inquired
If time for planting corn would never come;
And at rare intervals they faintly caught
A distant music in vibrations deep,
As some lone pheasant whirred about his nest,
Or in some hollow of the wooded glen,
The genius of the creek tuned his bassoon.
"Pray, wherefore do thorns grow?" the Being said:
This strange world puzzles me. Whether because
My vision is not clear; or mundane things,
Not focalized for foreign eyes, look dim."
"The dimness, mortal view affects, as well,"
Replied the Worker, with a faint, grave smile:
"Terrestrial things are mysteries to men.
Though deep the search, all human thought combined,
Through all the ages this old earth has told,
The simple problems thickly round us strewn,
Has failed to solve. At every point in life,
We question why; yet neither earth nor heaven
Vouchsafes us means of finding a reply.
Thorns grow because they must, because the Will
That formed the stem, the leaf, the flower, the fruit,
Said to the thorn, "Be Thou," and it became.
But why He wanted it, though it may serve

Some useful end, perhaps; or why He gave
The rose, and not the lily, this defence;
Or why he did not choose to make more thorns,
To prick the creatures subject to His will,
It does not seem His purpose to disclose.
But these poor spines,"—he said and softly laid
A finger on their keenly slender points,—
"Are innocent, and harmless quite, compared
With those mysterious thorns which pierce and rend
The souls of men, beyond their power to bear."
"Ah! friend, you mean the mystery of pain.
But is not pain the penalty of crime?
The forfeit by exacting Nature claimed
For the infraction of her needful laws?"
" 'Tis safe to grant that pains do often hedge
The pastures proper for the range of man,
Fencing him from the dangerous precipice;
And thus perforce his unknown good subserve.
Yet all pain serves not such an end as this:
The pains of infants who no laws could break,
Nor any wisdom learn by suffering;
The pangs which guilt on innocence inflicts;
The fearful tortures of the sense or soul,
That soften not the heart, nor bless the man,
But to a fatal desperation goad
Him on; these—and the sum of them is great
Beyond our utmost efforts to compute—
Can in your category find no place.
Wherefore such pains as these? Tell; if you may."
The Being sighed, and sadly said, "Alas!

That right seems wrong, and can not be explained.
God is omnipotent, 'tis said; if so,
By one assertion of His sovereign will,
All pain could be destroyed. In one swift hour
He could this writhing, groaning earth transform
Into a paradise, where pleasure reigned
Alone, and every creature breathed but bliss.
Whereas, the hungry cry to Him for food,
And starve to death, while His storehouse is full:
With rivers in His hand, fierce thirst consumes
His creatures: and His hot sun strikes them dead.
His cold who may abide? Its leaden clasp
Crushes the limb and life; nor would relax
Its cruel gripe although the best of men,
And tender infancy, and helpless brutes,
Alike should stiffen in its fatal folds.
Nor is this all. God filled man's frame with nerves
Contrived with ecstasies of pain to thrill;
And daily sees them in unnumbered ways,
Beyond the limits of their tension strained.
And sees the souls of men with anguish wrung,—
Tortures untold, and inexpressible,—
As far exceeding physical distress,
As thought transcends dull matter's senselessness.
Sees all the hopes and joys crushed out of lives;
And hears their silent wail for treasures lost,
As bleeding hearts their hungry lives prolong.

Sees suffering of every kind and form
That intellect of demons could devise
To wring a moan from Patience's smiling lips.
Sees—not at intervals alone—each pulse
Of this poor world has beaten pain intense,
Through all the ages; and its every breath
Has been a shuddering sigh. Yet God sits still,
In His own bright beatitude content,
And leaves the creatures He has made, to lack
Supplies which He could grant, for needs which He
Has formed: and lets them in the darkness grope,
Until they fall upon His thorns, and die.
God can, and does not, therefore will not, help;
And therefore He wills pain. Hence, pain is not
The evil that we think; or God is not
The Goodness that we hope. Pain must be good,
Or God His creatures can neglect, or else
He lacks the power or will to do them good;
And such a God were none, or worse than none."
The Worker had not inattentive been,
But silent sat, apparently absorbed
In watching the strange evolutions made
By a large spider, black and furry-legged,
Among the roots that overhung the stream.
But now, by some mischance, its poise it lost,
And fell, without a thread, into the creek.
The slow shore-current would have swept it off,
But with one hand the Worker grasped a root,
To hold him firmly as below he swung,
And with the other reached the Being's staff,
To the receding insect, just in time
To meet its clasping limbs, and land it safe.

"Why take such pains to save so mean a
thing?"
The Being questioned, in assumed surprise.
"And why not kill it now? The ugly brute
Is thief, and murderer, and villain quite:
What pretext for compassion could it plead?"
"I know no answer for so many whys,"
In thoughful tone, the Worker made reply.
"My client insignificant may be,
Cruel, and treacherous, and wholly bad;
Yet he has life and feeling. And in me
Some instinct, taste, propensity, or whim,—
I scarce know which,—a satisfaction finds
In seeing comfort felt by aught that feels.
Whereby it follows, that if I relieve
Discomfort in another, to prevent
My own discomfort, my own pleasure, is
My motive ultimate. So paramount
Is self."
"But tell me, friend," the Being asked,
"Whence you this instinct have derived? Did
you
Create yourself? Or did your Maker make
You better than Himself? More tender, more
Compassionate and kind, and more benign?"
"If that were possible," the Worker said,
'Twould scarce be politic, I think, unless
A fiend were God, and wished to merit hate.
If I, supreme above the universe,
Sat regnant, I suppose my first decree
Would suffering annihilate, and roll
A flood of joy around the world, to drown

The souls of men in ecstasy."
"And Self,"
The Being added. "Nothing draws a man
Out of his ugly case of self, and melts
The icy hardness of his heart, so well
As sorrow for another's suffering."
"Ah! then must others suffer for our good?
Pleasing reflection! Just arrangements too!"
"Nay, friend, but for the sufferer himself,
Some pain is an essential good. The soul
Needs sorrow to mature its faculties,
As ripening mast the frost requires: and as
The same keen thrill turns all the bitterness
To sweetness, in the wild-grape's blood. No life
Is perfected, no character can be,
Without a painful crown of thorns, complete.
Not flowers, but thorns, Life's richest sweets
distil."
"It then remains for us to draw the line
Between injurious and useful pains;
Which, who of us is competent to do?"
"He only, who the true connection sees,
Between the cause and consequence; who knows
The means that will produce the best result;
And sees from the beginning to the end.
A sight and knowledge far beyond the scope
Of human faculties in this dim life."
Small rings upon the water warning them,
They rose, and with reluctance turned away
From the clear creek. And soon the rain fell
fast.
"If we no uses for the clouds could see,

Or were not skilled connecting links to trace
Between our crops and rain, we might suppose
That clouds and storms were evils. But we
know
That rain means bread, and meat, and all good
cheer,
And comfort, and abundance; and we smile
A welcome to the frowning clouds, and meet
The storms with exultation."
"Let us then,
Trust that the clouds which darken life will
bring
To poor humanity the good it needs,
Hereafter, if not here. Trust that the same
Kind scepter of beneficence is swayed
Above the moral world, that with so wise
And beautiful an order, rules in all
Material spheres of this terrestrial life."
Discoursing thus they walked; the while the
rain
Fell heavily, and the dim daylight died.
The winds with large drops pelted them, and
tossed
Their straying locks about; with little rills
Their clinging garments dripped; around their
path
The rain in slanting lances fell; and broke,
And at their feet in splintered brilliants lay.
Yet naught of this they heeded; cheerfully
Braving the reckless storm's increasing force,
With fresh, moist faces, and unhasting steps,
They wended back their way to Castle Dorn.

The Charity of Beauty

"On! On! Still on, time rolls its tide:
And life is ceaseless action. From the stars
That spin through boundless space, to the small heart
That pulsates in a mite, all nature moves;
Whether with lightning's instantaneous flash,
Or rush of foaming cataracts, or with
Slow process of disintegrating stone."

"Hence the successive seasons come and go,
Bringing and taking pleasures, griefs, and cares.
Now Winter, with its hardships and its cheer,
The genial season has again restored,
With its delights and labors. Thus these two
Opposing forces, for each other work,
And so between them mould, produce, sustain,
Material Nature's various lovely forms."

So two conversed, as slowly forth they fared
Together, in a not unwonted quest,
Of such additions to the noontide meal
As bounteous Nature offered them unasked.
Nor had they far to seek. About their path
The tonic dandelion's runcinate,
Long leaves were thickly spread; and with a knife
Of graven copper, One, while with a nail,
Used as a lever to uproot the stalks,
The Other, for a salad gathered them.
To an old straw-stack's fertile site, in search
Of wholesome lambs-quarter they next repair;
And when they had their broken basket filled

Above the brim, with these wild esculents,
From the ascending sun's increasing heat,
To welcome rest the cooling shades invite.
  Just at the timber's verge, hard by, there stood
A half-grown maple, shapely, and adorned
With ample foliage, whose vivid green
Was by the red-brown of new shoots relieved.
Thither they hied, and in its shelter kind,
One stretched his long length on the grass, supine,
To talk or listen as it pleased him best,—
Rare privilege in late society,—
The while the Other sat against the tree,
Culling the greens to fit them for the fire.
  Above them hung a sea of blue, serene,
Athwart whose depths a little downy fleet
With sails of purest white, or softest grey,
Went drifting slowly eastward: while below,
Their timid shadows crept across broad fields
Of wheat and oats, whose tender verdure lay,
Like deep-piled velvet, spread around; and then
Among the billows of dark-tufted grass,
Now gently swelling o'er the late burned Slough,
Whence,—like the progeny of Night and Fear,
Restless and furtive,—on again they fled
Over the striped cornfield, till at length,
They hid in the recesses of a wood
In the far distance; where,—tradition said,—
A race superior to mortals dwelt,
Who once disdained not human intercourse,
Though now invisible; and their dark wood,

Enchanted, inaccessible to man.
The moaning dove had hatched her brood, and flown;
And all the birds that sang around were gay;
The jaunty woodpecker drilled cheerily;
And 'mid white clover blooms the brown bees hummed
Their busy roundelays. Like fairy bells,
The cottonwoods their bursting catkins swung,
And freed the downy sprites imprisoned there;
Who flew away, each with a miracle
Enfolded in its breast. The glad leaves sang
In a low-whispered cadence: and across
One soul, at least, there surged a voiceless tide,
As Nature's sacred hand swept o'er the strings
Of her own harp invisible, and woke
A strain too keenly sweet, too sweetly sad
For outward sense of mortal to endure.
"On such a day, in such a spot as this,
We scarce our lost Lemuria need deplore:
The beaming skies; the fresh, fair earth; the breeze;
The tuneful tribes; the fragrant, steamy mould,
In unison appeal: 'Insatiate Man,
Is not this Eden, paradise enough?'
And for this hour, soft echoes might be left
To make reply."
The Voice came from the Form,
Which still upon the sward extended lay,
Half-buried in tall weeds; while over It
The pointed shadows of the maple leaves
Trembled, and danced, and fluttered, and reposed.

Then suddenly It cried, "A treasure trove!"
And bending down a hazel bush that grew
Almost within Its reach, disclosed to view
A beauteous little monster. Breaking off
The twig whereon it clung, together they
Sat down, the bright, repulsive thing to view.
A long, thick, pulpy mass of paly green,
With numerous feet; and horns; and globules
black,
Set in for eyes; and bristling crests of black
On head, and back, and sides; and bands of
gold,
Or white, opaque; and discs, and lines, and
points,
Of white, and gold, and black, over the whole
Green, polished surface, carefully disposed.
"How marvellous," said One, "that so much
care,
Such taste, and skill,—and thought apparently—
By Nature's Architect should be employed
In so elaborating such a worm
As this! Who, seeing it, can fail to ask,
Why, and for whom, He works?"
"Both for Himself
And us," replied the Other; "God delights
In decoration. Witness the bright hosts
Of gorgeous clouds around His suns, which
rise,
And set, at once, in some place, every hour;
Witness a tender, cloud-flecked sky, like this,
Or this same blue, with silver stars besprent;
Witness fair Earth, whether in vernal robes,
Or ermine, or autumnal tints arrayed;

And every pure, sweet flower, expression meet,
Of incommunicable thoughts divine;
And witness all the animated tribes
Of earth, and air, and sea, whose coloring
And grace words can not paint; each drop of dew,
That holds an iris; and the marvels grand,
That hide their glories in each ray of light.
Ah! they do well, who building for Him fanes,
Rear not poor, dreary barns, which scarce were fit
To serve for use of wandering hippodrome;
But digging from His quarries choicest stone,
And bringing richest metals from His mines,
Finding His precious jewels, and with woods
Of rarest worth; all hewn, and carved, and wrought
With the best taste and skill wherewith God's grace
Has finite faculties of Man endowed;—
And with that faithful care which perfects not
Alone the lofty arch and column grand,
But each minute, unseen detail as well,—
A temple raise whose majesty and grace
Awe and delight alike inspire; and whose
Adorning,—priceless products of high Art—
Resplendent with vermilion, gold, and blue,
Toned with relief of umbers, soft or grave,
Vie, not in vain, with Nature's polychrome.
Do they not well, who by such offerings,
Appreciation of His works evince,
And gratitude for His good gifts express?"

"Yes; well, if this they do, and yet leave not
Undone, due ministration to the needs,
Unnumbered, of distressed humanity.
A tribute surely more acceptable
Than gifts to Him who needs them not; because
A recognition of that love divine,
Which is best pleased when others are most blest."

"Yet did not he mistake that love, who said
Of one such offering to the Lord of all,
'This should be sold, and given to the poor'?
And it is true that not by bread alone
Man lives; though bread he surely needs. He eats
Material food, forgets it, and remains
Still the same man. Whereas, by proper use
Of spiritual nourishment, the Man
Not only eats and lives, but grows into
Another Self, superior to the first.
And therefore they who feast the souls of men
Upon the Beautiful, and thereby feed
The higher life, while ministering joy,
Are benefactors to humanity,
Not less than they who offer Man a crust.

No thought can estimate the final worth
Of even one stately cathedral's power
To teach, delight, refine, and elevate,
The countless multitudes of barbarous souls,
Who, through unnumbered generations, feel
Its sublimated beauty. Take away
The architecture of the world, and man
Less evidence of great abilities
Could furnish; and less hope could entertain,

Of that high destiny which promises
The power to express, and to enjoy,
The Beautiful, hereafter, evermore."
"Beauty brings pleasure; true; yet there are times
When pleasure is unwelcome. When the soul
The pangs of keenest grief is suffering;
And can not bear the cheerful light of day;
Nor any hope of happiness desires;
A thoughts of pleasure is a sacrilege,
And Beauty seems to make a mock of woe.
Nature herein shows lack of sympathy,
As in the sternness of her moods severe.
Grass grows upon the grave; and flowers bloom
As gaily there, as though their roots drank not
The bitter lees of joy forever lost."
"Is then the mother heartless, when her lips
Press her loved child's bruised brow, and with a smile
She comforts him, and charms away his pain?
Wise Nature, knowing that our keenest pains,
Although inevitable, yet must needs
Be transitory too, since limited
The power to endure; and kind as wise,
By slow degrees benumbs the suffering sense,
Till even Memory can scarce recall
The utter anguish; and Indifference
Looks dully back, almost incredulous.
The force of contrast may a shock produce,
When Beauty's soothing balm is first applied
To the sore, palpitating soul; yet soon
Its healing power is felt; and—marvel more

Beneficient—from the old life, a new
And better, stronger, deeper life, it moulds.
The Beautiful which charms the sense or soul,
Pleasure alone was meant not to inspire:
By natural law, our plastic natures grow
Like what we most admire; and thus by love
Of beauty, loveliness in us is formed.
Man, in this world is ever incomplete;
Through all his mortal life he undergoes
The process of creation. And sharp pain,
And smoothing pleasures, both, in the sure hand
Of the great Sculptor, shaping chisels are
Forming the Being for Futurity,
By His far-seeing eye, at first discerned."

"It were a cheering hope, that all, at last,
Should reach the stature of the perfect man.
Perhaps it may in some state come to pass:
But judging from the little that we see
Of human life; and from analogies
Which everywhere in lower spheres abound,
Comparatively few will ever reach
The bounds of seeming possibilities.
How many of May's blossoms set in fruit?
And of these giddy, whirling cotton-seeds,
Which sail they care not where, how very few
Will bourgeon into trees? Nature's vast stores
Are so exuberant, that though she guards
Each species with most jealous care, she seems
Indifferent to individuals.—
Which theory, this unctuous, sleek worm,
Might, if it could, be tempted to gainsay."

Replacing it upon its native bush,
In courteous tone, the Creature he addressed:
"Thanks, hideous Beauty, for the pleasing text,
Which for our sage discourse, you have supplied;
And pray your pardon grant, to the rude man,
Selfish enough to take you from your haunt,
And so detain you, at his own behest,
Without one thought of what you might desire."
He took the basket now, and through the wood,
They started to return; but blooming things,
Wild-roses, spiderwort, and adder's-tongue,
With shining, threatening forks, their steps delayed.
And then they found ripe berries in the grass,
And in a dock-leaf basin gathered them;
Which broke beneath them, wasting time and care.
Then One, versed in the ways of animals,
Fashioned a nest of long, fine grass, to hold
The luscious fruit; which, when it was well filled,
The Other with a fragrant garland graced,
Of purple horsemint blooms, edged with a fringe
Of delicate green leaves. One lifted then
The broken basket's weight; while in both hands
The Other held the nest; and laden thus,
They hastened their return to Castle Dorn.

Being

Embowered in the peaceful, dreamy shade
Of its majestic oaks, and bending elms,
Its gracious vines, and generous wild-fruit trees,
And thickets dense of darkly-shining thorn,
Grey Castle Dorn in utter silence lay.
The hot air through its darkened chambers stole,
Over closed eyelids; then, with slow ascent,
Above the stairway motionlessly hung:
While in the hall below, Two sat, apart,
With bowed heads dreaming over wise, old books.
While yet they dreamed, together they arose,
And taking from its place the wander-staff,
Went slowly out through the wide-open door,—
The great, brown watch-dog, which half-sleeping lay
Upon the threshold, following,—and passed
Beneath the trees, into the mid-day glare
Of the still yards, where lazy cattle stood
And dozed, unmindful of their cuds; and fowls,
Alternate wings extending, sunned themselves,
Half-burrowing in the earth.
Then on the Two
Into the darkness of the plum-grove strayed,
And marked the swelling of the half-grown fruit;
And then among the vines whose tendrils gleamed
Pale green and crimson, 'mid the clustering leaves

That hid the tender grapes. Thence on beneath
Green waxen spheres of spicy crab-apples,
And slowly-filling cherries, which e'en yet
Delayed their treacherous blushes. So along
The lane, where giant basswoods late displayed
The creamy blossoms that with odors sweet
And subtle filled the pulseless air,—they went,
Passing unchallenged by the Sentinels,
Which in the stateliness, and pride, and wealth,
And glory of full summerhood, were now
Grandly arrayed.

Then a broad field appeared,
And in the northern distance stretched away,
Level and wrinkled, like a darkling sea,
For now its green lines, widening, had met,
And after many ploughings, the rank corn
Had been, at length, laid by. Along the field
The road led on, till through a skirting growth,
Half wood, half coppice,—where the sumach bright
Lifted aloft its thyrsus, golden-green,
And hazels curled their clustered pericarps,
And fragrant horsemint wore its graceful crown,
It opened on a field of early rye,
Already flecked with foam of ripening heads
Floating and melting, as upon the breeze
Its undulations lightly rose and fell.

Here a fair prospect met the wandering eye;
Not bright with the unvaried emerald
Of Spring's soft, flowing robe; but with all hues
And shades of summer-green diversified,
The contrast heightening the charms of each.
Pale seas of headed wheat o'er levels swept

Or mounted in the rolling prairie's swells;
And here and there a field of tardy oats
Lay like a lake of beryl, islanding
A few unneeded trees. Upon two sides
The grain-fields cut the sky, as though they were
The utmost limits of the fertile earth:
Whence the grey shadows, which, like fitful thoughts,
Darkened, dissolved, and formed again, and sped
Away in heedless flight, or wild pursuit,
Plunged headlong into the abyss of space.
The vision otherwhere was darkly closed
By dendral walls, in cloud-like masses piled,
With tender, pallid lights of fresh, new-green
Glinting from richer depths of earlier growths,
In the white sunshine's fiercely glittering gleams.
But prospects more remote, or near, delayed
Not long the footsteps of the Wanderer;
Short space they gazed on fields and foliage,
With fences sunk in thrifty weeds between;
And pausing for a moment by the hedge,—
Where a large butterfly with swaying wings
Of downy velvet, painted gorgeously,
Sat dreamily upon a drooping rose;—
They watched the black, gold-banded bees at Work
Among the purple clover-blossoms, whose sweets
Not without recompense they sought, but with
A store of fruitful pollen well repaid.
Then, seeking refuge from the burning rays

Of the midsummer sun, beyond the rye
They hastened on, and found a hidden spring
Amid the tall grass of a billowy Slough,
Whose waters cool they gladly quaffed, although
They knew that frisking polliwogs, and things
Alive, in microscopic myriads
Of horrid forms, were mingled with the draught.
So thirsty souls, through life's exhaustive day,
Too often shake their eagerness at streams
Whose turgid waters in solution hold
Horrors too hideous for an open view.
  On, over the new breaking, through the late
Plough-planted corn, they took their way; and o'er
The wooded hills where fire-flowers glowed;
And through the snowy clover-drifts which lay
Upon the verdure of the bottom bog;
To the clear creek, that, cradled by the bluffs,
And curtained close with salvage greenery,
Sang softly its own lullaby, to chant
Of murmuring leaves fitly attuned. Again
They found a resting-place upon its banks;
And in the grateful shade, at ease disposed,
Resumed their books; and either read aloud
Aught that they wished to share; or following
Some leading thought, as was their wont, discussed
The problems of existence.
  Shadow leaves
Fell on the thoughtful pages, for between
Them and the turquoise sky, suspended hung
Soft clouds of foliage that dimmed the day.

But here and there the clear creek's depths
were paved
With pale turquoise, and its smooth hyaline,
True as an echo, rendered its green shores
In softened repetition; and the trees
Upon its marge, grew double, base to base.
Brown, lustrous weavers, on the water wove
Imaginary webs, in rapid gyres;
And brilliant dragon-flies, with wings of gauze
Above it darting sailed. The scarabs' shards
Flashed back the light; laborious emmets
raised
Their ridgy circles o'er the mellow soil;
Midges, and gnats, flyhawks, and all the scale
Of insect being, in unnumbered forms,
Down to the merest animated point,
And bright with every gorgeous hue embraced
In full prismatic chord, their birthright claimed
In the vast fields of ether, and among
The wastes and wilds of ample earth; for now
The blessed tide of happy summer-life
Rolled swelling o'er the land.—Happy, although
A hungry wasp, dark-shining, steely-blue,
Came by the Readers, with a frightened worm
In his exultant grasp, yet let it fall,
And the same moment, a small, ash-grey toad,
With round, black eyes, and palpitating throat,
Sprang from an old tree's roots, and swallowed
it:—
Happy, although each life became the prey
And sustenance of other lives, because
Each life without demur fulfilled
The end for which it was designed: and naught

But Goodness can create; or faith and hope
Are only empty names.
The day wore on;
And when at length the dusky shadow-leaves
Left the strange pages, and began to climb,
In social mood the neighboring eastern trees,
The stolen lore in whispers to relate,
The Worker and the Being turned away,
To leave their charmed retreat. But as they rose
A gruesome vision met their startled gaze,
And held them motionless. Through the dim wood
A fearful, nameless ghoul, with its dark train
Of imps attendant, to the stream came down;
Traversed its banks awhile, as though intent
Upon some fruitless quest, then turned again
Into the shadowy wood, and disappeared.
Spellbound the Two had stood, and the great dog,
Courageous to attack his natural foes,
Now shrank instinctively away, and claimed
Protection from his master. Nature thus,
Even through brutes, proclaims Man's sovereignty.
Much marvelling upon the wondrous sight,
So seldom to the eyes of men vouchsafed,
They left the spot, and their wild way pursued
Through trackless wastes; winding through deep ravines,
Where trickling streamlets ventured on their way;
Climbing the hills, with ever ready aid
Of willing wanderstaff; crossing rough sloughs,

Half-dry, on withered tussocks of old grass
And roots uncertain; wading then through ferns
Whose frouds were freighted with the magic spores
Which render men invisible, and whose
Tall tops were closely rolled in curious coils
Of inky blackness. So at length they came
Upon the wooded hills where numerous herds
Of restless cattle browsed; and 'mid the din
Of jangling bells, the Worker's practiced ear
His own distinguished; and with noisy aid
Of the great watch-dog, gathering his flocks,
He sent them scurrying home.
Through deepening shades,
And the wood's reverent silence, on the Two
Proceeded. Presently a strain, low, soft,
Melodious, as a fairy's distant song,
Grew on the wondering sense. With a quick tone
Expressing comprehension, suddenly
The Worker plunged into the wood, and soon
Revealed, near by, a darkly pendent cone,
Solid, but to its inmost core instinct
With clinging, crawling, buzzing troubled life.
Without delay the Two sped quickly back
To glooming Castle Dorn, where little time
Sufficed them to procure a welcome meal,
And needments for their enterprise; and then
Through darkness they were driving down the lane,
In a farm-wagon, to secure the swarm.
Before they reached the place, the horses' heads
They turned into the wood; there fastening

The team, they left the wain; and with a light,
A dark brown candle, in an ancient stick,—
They to the scene of action went.
  The bough
That held the swarm hung low; and under it
Upon a bench, they placed an upturned hive:
The Worker then cut off the branch, and with
Slow care they lowered the dark murmuring
    mass
Of restless, pain-and-sweetness-giving, life
Into the hive; then stepped aside, to wait
The further movements of the sapient throng.
Finding themselves disturbed by unknown cause
Alarm spread through the roused community;
Some over-ran the branch; and some the sides
Of the strange hive crept down; and other some
Wheeled wildly in uncertain flight, to find
What danger threatened them. When, finding
    naught,
They settled quietly, though still dispersed,
The Worker ventured on a fresh assault.
Upon the ground near by, he spread a cloth,
Then took the teeming hive into his arms,
Keeping the swarm within, and on the cloth
Set it reversed, leaving the bough beneath.
  The wrathful bees, supposing they at length
Had found a foe, the Worker now beset,
With angry buzz, and levin-pointed darts,
Whirling about his unprotected head,
And his bare hands uplifted in defense,
Until, confused by hissings on all sides,
And by fierce, sudden, unexpected thrusts
Of red-hot javelins, and envenomed spears,

Transported quite, he raging beat the air,
And with low, ululating groans, bemoaned
A broken skull, and limbs forever maimed.
Whereat the Being laughed; not from a lack
Of sympathy; but with amused surprise
To find a paltry insects sting possessed
Of potency to vanquish instantly
The quick valor which could meet unmoved
A roaring lion, or walk tranquilly
Up to the cannon's mouth.
  Leaving the bees
Their own devices to pursue, the Two
Back to the wagon went; and there awhile
They rested from their task; One, seated on
The heaps of hay strewn in the wain; the while
With folded arms the Other standing leaned
Against the wagon-box, and much deplored
His ignominious conduct; and declared
That he could without flinching bear the pain;
And wished the bees would put him to the
    proof;
And finally adventuring to the test,
Went back amidst the swarm.
  Then left alone,
One silent sat, beneath the trembling stars,
And converse held with Heaven, or with self;
Until the Other came with a report
Of favorable progress. The white road
Cleft the dark wood, and down it, on the sand,
The candle burned, like a lost, fallen star.
Now toward it they went; its feeble rays
Not far diffused, shone upward on the leaves,
With blanching light, fantastical, and weird.

The bees had settled chiefly in the hive,
Yet were its sides half covered, and about
The branch they clung, and on the bench or ground
Wandered a few confused. A leafy twig,
The Worker for a besom served; with it
He gently brushed the bees into the hive
And if they stung him made no suffering sign.
When all but a few stragglers were safe housed,
The Two gathered the ends of the great cloth
And folding them across the top, and down
The sides of the full hive, secured the whole
With a strong band of twisted hay, and then
The Worker in the wagon placed the hive,
Embedded in soft hay; then carefully
Extinguished the wasted candle's flame,
They climbed again into the rattling wain,
And through the moonlight, singing merrily,
Triumphant, they drove back to Castle Dorn.

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